

ENGLISH RADICALISM

1853–1886

by

S. MACCOBY, Ph.D.

LONDON

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ENGLISH RADICALISM 1853-1886

S. MACCOBY

Disraeli once wrote of the "standard history" of his own day: "Generally speaking, all the great events have been distorted, most of the important causes concealed, some of the principal characters never appear, and all who figure are so misunderstood and misrepresented that the result is a complete mystification." Dr. Maccoby, in his study of English Radicalism, goes well behind the accepted "standard history," following in the footsteps of the Webbs, who have given such admirable stimulus to historical revaluation. The author's previous book on English Radicalism was acclaimed as one of the most original contributions so far made to the work of correcting older conceptions of Nineteenth-Century History. This new volume deals with a period even more in need of historical revision, and for such a revision the author is well equipped by research.



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P R E F A C E

THE kind reception given to *English Radicalism 1832-1852* has encouraged the production of the present volume. And to rewrite the history of the period 1853-86 from the standpoint of its "progressive" forces seemed to offer very special chances of enlightenment. To take merely the opening of the period, how many students have even heard of the India Reform Society of 1853, the Financial Reform Association of Liverpool, or the Administrative Reform Association of 1855? Yet the first was active in propaganda for the end of Company rule in India, conceded in 1858; the second deserves much of the credit for the virtually unopposed extension of Free Trade in 1853 and 1860; and the agitation of the third forced the appointment of the Civil Service Commission.

Or to go further into our period, who now remembers the National Reform League of 1865-9 which was primarily responsible for the Parliamentary Reforms of 1867-8? Who recalls the patient uphill work of the Liberation Society to whose agitation must be ascribed such things as the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 and the Abolition of Religious Tests at the Universities in 1871? Even the Ballot Act of 1872 often appears in the text-books like a bolt from the blue. The succession of Ballot Committees and Societies which kept the cause alive for four decades after 1832 is forgotten and the Act becomes merely another proof of the "reforming zeal of the great Gladstone Government."

And so the story could be continued, every chapter adding to the proof of the serious student's need for going well behind much of the "standard history" written for him. All too often this "standard history," from the confinement of its view to Downing Street and *The Times* Editorial Office, has become a mere *fable convenue*. As Disraeli once wrote of the "standard history" of his own day: "Generally speaking all the great events have been distorted, most of the important causes concealed, some of the principal characters never appear, and all who figure are so misunderstood and misrepresented that the result is a complete mystification."

It would be wrong to forget that in one department of History, at least, there already exists, thanks to the stimulus of the Webbs,

a whole literature to turn to for correction and amplification of text-book accounts. But much "working-class history" will be found to suffer from faults of its own. Sometimes it is in danger of becoming mere Trade Union antiquarianism; and often it is studied not for its own sake but to serve as introduction to accounts of the "Labour triumphs" of the twentieth century. Certainly there is still ample room for attempts to relate nineteenth-century "working-class history" more organically to the political developments of its own time than has hitherto been effected.

This Preface must not be closed without acknowledging the kind encouragement given by Mr. H. L. Beales in the opening stages of a difficult undertaking, the unwearying services rendered during its course by the staff of the Bishopsgate Institute and, finally, the helpful interest taken by the administrators of the University of London Publication Fund.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
PREFACE	7
I "ADVANCED" POLITICS IN 1853	11
II THE CRIMEAN WAR, FIRST STAGE	24
III RADICAL AGITATION GROWS DANGEROUS, 1855	35
IV PALMERSTON HOLDS RADICALISM IN CHECK	51
V DISTRACTIONS FROM REFORM, 1858-64	67
VI THE REFORM LEAGUE AND THE REFORM UNION	83
VII HOW PARLIAMENTARY REFORM WAS CARRIED, 1867-8	95
VIII THE ADVANCE OF LABOUR	107
IX RELIGION	133
X POLITICAL "ADVANCE" IN 1869 AND 1870	149
XI POLITICS GROW MORE AGITATED, 1870-1	164
XII DECLINE AND FALL OF THE GLADSTONE GOVERNMENT	179
XIII PARTY CONTROVERSY, 1874-6	194
XIV THE EASTERN QUESTION, FIRST STAGE	209
XV THE EASTERN QUESTION, BEACONSFIELD'S TRIUMPH	223
XVI THE UNDERMINING OF "BEACONS- FIELDISM"	236
XVII IRELAND DELAYS "PROGRESS," 1880-1	253
XVIII THE SESSIONS OF 1882 AND 1883	269

English Radicalism 1853-1886

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIX THE STRUGGLE FOR PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, 1884	285
XX APPROACH OF THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1885	303
XXI "LABOUR" AND THE BIRTH OF BRITISH SOCIALISM, 1874-86	322
SPECIAL CHAPTERS	
XXII RADICALS AND THE COLONIES, 1853-86	343
XXIII RADICALS AND INDIA	364
XXIV LOCAL GOVERNMENT	383
APPENDIX—SOME RADICAL DIFFICULTIES ON FOREIGN POLICY	405
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	409
INDEX	423

"ADVANCED" POLITICS IN 1853

"There will be an attempt on the part of moderate Tories and Whigs and timid men who call themselves neither Tories nor Whigs, and of the Press, to put down any independent action on the part of the Radicals. We shall be advised to trust everything to men of 'long tried statesmanship,' to 'a combination of talent,' to a 'strong Government,' etc. . . . And if we do trust everything to them we shall be sold as usual . . ."

Bright to Cobden, January 5, 1853. (From G. M. TREVELYAN'S "Life of John Bright," p. 230.)

"Mischief and subversion are the main objects of the Radicals of England. They have not, they cannot have, a just plea for their policy. We may think and speak differently of cultivated Revolutionists, who have deep grievances and mighty impediments in the way of amelioration. But civil and religious liberty are complete with us; the people have not a wrong unredressed, nor the Radicals a right unattained, and yet their spirit is that of Mazzini, Ledru Rollin and Kossuth."

LORD SHAFTESBURY *in his Diary, September 1, 1853. (From HODDER'S "Life and Work of Lord Shaftesbury, ii, 447.)*

"At the meeting held in Manchester in which it was declared imperatively necessary that a 'Labour Parliament' should be summoned, it was resolved that 'the time had arrived when a united and mass movement of the working classes, based on a national organisation, and guided by one directing body, could alone ensure adequate support to the men now locked out of employment and on strike; and enable working men in future to emancipate labour from the thralldom of capital.' It was also resolved that the 'Labour Parliament,' consisting of delegates elected by the working men of each town, should meet as soon as possible. . . ."

The "Illustrated London News," December 10, 1853.

At the beginning of 1853 the disjointed Radical and "advanced Liberal" groups of the House of Commons contained some one hundred and sixty members who seemed to have good reason for confidence. A Tory Government had just been brought down and a Coalition "Liberal" Government substituted in which Radicalism was allowed a Cabinet representative in Sir William Molesworth. Moreover both the Whigs and the Peelites of the Cabinet had specifically committed themselves to further Parliamentary Reform. Thus Sir James Graham, the Peelite leader in the Commons, had assured his Carlisle constituents that "unless the present Government do bring forward a Reform Bill, I do not remain in office."¹ Villiers of Anti-Corn Law fame, again, as one of the Radicals nominated to non-Cabinet posts, had taken advantage of the re-election procedure to make it plain to his Wolverhampton supporters that Radical pressure for the Ballot and an extensive Redistribution of Parliamentary representation would not be abandoned.²

There was virtually no opposition, however, to the Ministers' resolve to delay the appearance of their Reform Bill until the opening of the next Session. Part of the current Session had already been consumed in the struggle to eject the Tory Government of Lord Derby, and for that part of the remainder, not of necessity devoted to Budget, Estimates and the like, the Cabinet was proposing a fair amount of "progressive"³ activity. Dissenter Radicals, for example, jubilant over a representation in the Commons now raised to thirty-six, apparently had special cause to be pleased with the Government's programme as announced on February 10th. Did it not commit even such a convinced Anglican as Gladstone to a Canadian Clergy Reserves Bill, a Jewish Emancipation Bill and an acknowledgement of the need for extensive University Reform? It was on the Canadian Bill to surrender the Clergy Reserves of Canada to the free disposition of a Canadian Parliament set on secularisation that the Peelite Ministers received the bitterest reproaches from their former Tory asso-

¹ *Illustrated London News*, January 8, 1853.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Hansard*, February 18th, for some raillery from Disraeli on the new vogue of "progress" among his opponents: "We have now got a Ministry of 'progress,' and every one stands still. We never hear the word 'reform' now; it is no longer a Ministry of Reform, it is a Ministry of Progress. . . ."

ciates.¹ Only the knowledge that Anglo-Canadian relations were being increasingly imperilled by the existing situation allowed the Peelites to persevere in their new course alongside Radical partisans of Disestablishment.

The Peelite Ministers were nevertheless destined to show that they were far from ready to surrender other parts of their Church and State Conservatism. There was keen Radical disappointment when it was learnt that the Government was proposing to leave English University Reform in the first instance to the Universities themselves and was refraining even from mentioning the claim of the Dissenters to share in the "advantages and honours" of Oxford and Cambridge.² Peelites, too, opposed Church Rate abolition as firmly as did the Tories, and no Government in which they were strongly represented was likely to accept Bright's Radical invitation to make war on the Lords for their persistent blocking of Jewish Emancipation.

Popular education was another field in which Radicals found the new Government's Liberalism much too diluted. Even the economical Hume professed his readiness to authorise the rating of every parish in the kingdom for elementary education and not merely those towns with municipal councils, as Lord John Russell was suggesting. W. J. Fox, again, condemned the timidity which only allowed urban rates to be used to supplement the subscribers' donations and the "children's pence" of voluntarily established schools conducted on a religious basis. He would have liked to see public schools established on the American plan and the children of all sects educated together by adequately remunerated teachers free to leave religious instruction to the Sunday school. It was a Radical ideal whose appeal was slowly to increase; but for the time it seemed to be making scant headway against the prejudices instantly excited by the thought of how easily the Radicals' "secular schools" might produce little infidels.³ In point

¹ Cf. Henry Drummond, April 11th (*Henry Drummond's Parl. Speeches*, i, 243 sqq.).

² *Hansard*, April 4th, Phinn and Blackett. In Scotland, however, where the position of the Church of Scotland was much weaker than that of its Anglican counterpart in England, the Peelites conceded the 16 & 17 Vict., cap. 89, relaxing the University Tests which had confined University teaching to members of the Church of Scotland.

³ *Hansard*, March 4th, shows how such prejudices strengthened Lord John Russell's negative on secular education. "The people of this country," he said, "act on a right instinct when they openly declare that there shall be religious training, which shall comprise all the great doctrines of Christianity."

of fact even Lord John Russell's timid Bill was finally surrendered, as the Government determined to promote popular education rather through the Committee of Council on which it could rely than through Town Councils whose Radicals might make trouble.¹

The absence of "distress" issues from the politics of 1853 is a significant mark of the relative "prosperity" of the times. There was no widespread popular misery for the "advanced" bourgeoisie to exploit, and the "Liberal" Ministers were relatively free to choose their own line between Tory intransigence on the one hand and "Radical impatience" on the other. Even Gladstone's Budget of 1853, which rightly ranks as by far the boldest piece of Government legislation of the year, contained sections thoroughly distasteful to the "advanced."

When the Budget discussions began, the Radicals, of course, gave unstinted approval to Gladstone's determination to follow in the footsteps of Peel and to require the "landed interest" to surrender yet another inequitable fiscal advantage detrimental to the revenue. Real property was to be asked to pay the succession duty, imposed as early as 1796 on personal property passing by will or inheritance. It was the redress of a grievance often complained of by Radicals and actually the subject of a Radical motion earlier in the Session. The increased yield moreover promised Gladstone a great part of the means required to grant a wide variety of abolitions and reductions of duty such as had not been seen since Peel's famous Budgets. Despite determined Tory resistance therefore the Budget was carried. But Gladstone had undoubtedly run risks. While antagonising the Tories² he had yet refused the Radicals the Income Tax concession they had long demanded—preferential treatment for earned as against unearned income.³ As he also held that the extensive remissions of indirect

¹ H. Holman, *English National Education*, pp. 128-32, for new departures by the Committee of Council dating from 1853. The setting up of the Charity Commission with important powers to improve the working of school and other endowments also dates from 1853 (16 & 17 Vict., cap. 137) and in fact represents almost the one piece of educational legislation, originally suggested by the Government, which was put upon the Statute Book.

² Cf. *Hansard*, July 22nd, for Malmesbury in the Lords picturing future Chancellors as vultures soaring over Society and watching for a harvest of dead meat. Yet Gladstone's Real Property Succession Duties were framed with so much consideration for the "landed interest" that they failed to yield anything like the sum he had hoped for!

³ In the phraseology of the time the Radical grievance was that "precarious incomes" from trades and professions were being taxed at the same rate as "secure incomes" from property. The most significant part of the official

taxation he was offering justified him in extending the Income Tax to small incomes of between £100 and £150, and to Ireland, something of the storm that might in unfavourable circumstances have descended upon him becomes obvious. What probably saved him was the great increase of prestige which came to him from his magnificent speaking in introducing the Budget and the Radical conviction that the Succession Duty and the “Free Trade” tax remissions it made possible were too valuable to throw away even for serious Income Tax grievances. Besides Gladstone had assured the House of Commons that the Exchequer had good hopes of gradually reducing the Income Tax to zero.

A minor Budget change which Gladstone was compelled to make was the result of a successful Radical motion of Milner Gibson’s aiming at the Abolition of the “Taxes on Knowledge.”¹ There was now a considerable agitation on the subject and it was aided by powerful interests in the Newspaper, Printing, and Papermaking worlds.² On two of the duties hindering cheap newspapers for the working classes, the paper excise and the penny newspaper stamp, Radical motions were defeated. But on the third duty, that on newspaper advertisements, Milner Gibson led the Radicals to victory thanks to some support from Disraeli who considered the advertisement duty a hindrance to business. Milner Gibson had another success later in the Session when he agreed to abandon his County Finance Boards Bill of the year on receiving a Government undertaking to project official legislation on similar lines.³ His five-year crusade for giving elected representatives of County ratepayers some control of the rates seemed not far from success.

The two other leaders of Manchester School Radicalism were meanwhile engaged in characteristic activities. Cobden had set himself the difficult task of preventing Anglo-French relations from deteriorating to the explosion-point which they had seemed to approach during 1852 under the stress of “defensive” British armament increases and Bonapartist resentment of British Press vituperation. In writing that famous pamphlet *1793 and 1853* counter-case was that the “earned income” of the commercial and professional classes already profited largely from superior opportunities of tax-evasion.

¹ Cf. *Hansard*, April 14th.

² C. D. Collet, *A History of the Taxes on Knowledge*, Chapters 6–11.

³ *Hansard*, July 13th. Earlier stages were on December 7th and February 13th. For the past history of the agitation see *English Radicalism 1832–1852*, pp. 387–9.

Cobden certainly went far to achieve his end; but not content with this he led some vigorous platform agitation in aid of the Quakerish Peace Society's efforts to stay the growth of anti-French feeling.¹ Far-sighted as he was, fully aware of the restless urge of strong sections of popular Radicalism to go crusading for liberty on the European Continent, even Cobden could have had no premonition of what was to prove the first result of the Anglo-French *détente* which he was so powerfully forwarding. By a chapter of the strangest accidents, popular concern for liberty abroad was diverted from the case of France so "perfidiously" brought under the Napoleonic military dictatorship to that of Turkey "oppressed" and threatened with annihilation by a tyrannous Tsar. Before long Napoleon III's ships and soldiers, which had scarcely ceased to be the theme of alarmist rhetoric, were being told over with enthusiasm as those of an ally against Russia. But the irresponsible nature of British "public opinion" on the eve of the Crimean War and during its course needs special treatment.

It was the question of India that Bright had been specially preparing to handle during the 1853 Session when the East India Company's Charter of 1833 approached its end. For more than a decade philanthropic Friends had been worried by the question of India's terrible poverty and the failure of Company rule to improve the situation.² Cotton manufacturers, too, had come under Quaker leadership to devote some attention to the possibility of encouraging the growth of exportable cotton in India. The Lancashire industry was dangerously dependent on the Slave States of the American Union for the bulk of its raw material. Lancashire would have preferred Free Labour cotton in any case, and from an India under British control and without tariff barriers serving like America's to prevent payment for the raw cotton being made in finished cotton goods. But what rendered the

¹ Cf. C. S. Miall's *Henry Richard* for the inner history of the Manchester Peace Congress, which was making so much noise in the Press at the end of January 1853. Cobden considered his anti-war campaigning as more important in the circumstances than the Suffrage agitation which Bright was pressing him to undertake (G. M. Trevelyan's *Life of John Bright*, pp. 210-11).

² Joseph Pease of Darlington, the Quaker manufacturer and railway pioneer, had founded a British India Society which had sent out George Thompson to India. Thompson allowed himself to become engrossed by the Company's "oppression" of the Rajah of Sattara so that a promising opportunity of doing something for the Indian ryot was lost. Hyslop Bell, *British Folks and British India*.

increase of Indian production specially desirable for Lancashire was the frequency of strained relations between London and Washington and the growing tension on the Slave Question within the United States. An Anglo-American War or a Civil War inside the Union each spelt grave danger for Lancashire, and so clearly that Bright had been granted a Select Committee on Indian Cotton in 1848. Bright had next gone on to demand a Royal Commission to visit India, and when this had been refused he had succeeded in enlisting sufficient support in the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to permit of the despatch of a notable private investigator.¹

Having come to the conclusion that till Company rule was abolished nothing effective would be done, Bright led the opposition to the Ministerial proposals to retain the old Company framework with considerable alterations. He was certain that a Government Department with full responsibility for India would give better results than the system which allowed a City Board of Directors such facilities for masking their own nepotism, the inertia and oppression of their subordinates and the expensive military follies of the Board of Control. Less would be spent on wars and more on public works; and an oppressively raised revenue of 29 millions might be made to yield more for education than £66,000.²

Bright obviously made some impression upon “public opinion”³ though he secured only the most trifling changes in the Government’s plans. The effect of what he had said on Indian wars and the growing Indian Debt was to be enhanced when Cobden⁴ issued

¹ Cf. Bright’s *Speeches on Public Policy* (ed. 1869), pp. 100–4.

² *Hansard*, June 3rd.

³ C. S. Miall’s *Henry Richard* gives an excellent eyewitness account of the debates: “Bright spoke admirably,” wrote Richard in his diary. “His speech was not better in matter than Cobden’s, but it was delivered with an air of confidence, self-possession, and earnestness, which gave it a great advantage in point of effect at the time. He was listened to with profound attention, and is evidently becoming a great favourite with the House” (p. 96).

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 95–6, for an explanation of Cobden’s greater effectiveness at this time with the pen, an explanation, too, which sheds some light on Cobden himself and his position in Parliamentary Radicalism. “Cobden’s speech was excellent,” wrote Richard, “grappling, in his usual keen, logical, direct style, with the very core of the subject. But it was very badly delivered, broken and hesitating to a degree that greatly marred the effect of his reasoning. He told me before he went in that he was excessively nervous. He said also that he becomes more and more nervous every time he addresses the House, which, no doubt, partly accounts for his speaking so rarely. His position is no doubt a very trying one. The Tories still hate him. The Whigs dislike him greatly because he won’t become a part of their tail, as so many of the *ci-devant* Radicals have consented to do. The old Radicals who were in the House long before him, such as Sir B. Hall, Williams, Brotherton, etc., are extremely jealous.”

another famous pamphlet, *How Wars are got up in India*. Cobden had been making a close study of the British documents on the Burmese War then being fought, and without needing to use any other material he produced a damning indictment of the wrongheadedness and violence which had been shown on the British side.¹ The most widely circulated paper of the time, the *Illustrated London News*, though already bellicose about Russia, felt it necessary to make Cobden the following concession as to Burma:²

It is not often that Englishmen have occasion to blush for their country; but if the narrative be a true one, it is time not only to blush and be penitent but to put an honourable end to a war commenced and carried on under such prettexts. No nation be it ever so mighty can afford the disgrace of such a deed. There is a public opinion even in the East, that sooner or later will spread itself throughout all the tribes and populations that yield us allegiance, and cry for vengeance against such an atrocity.

Outside "high politics" the year 1853 was distinguished by a mighty "wages movement." Industry and commerce were extremely flourishing thanks to the steady influx of Californian and Australian gold; ambitious working men were still emigrating in such numbers that timid folk began to worry over the consequences; and wage advances were secured the more easily in many trades because of the admitted "scarcity of hands." In numerous instances these wage advances were won without a strike and in many others they were conceded after only the briefest of struggles. For a time it seemed that the great cotton industry, too, would succeed in revising its wages agreements without a dangerous conflict. There was a considerable contest at Stockport in the early summer, but after peace had been made on the basis of the return to the men of a 10 per cent wage-cut of 1847 these terms seemed likely to be adopted throughout the cotton areas.

Trouble, however, broke out at Preston, and the town was converted into a theatre where the entire strength of the cotton operatives of the country, supported by the subscriptions of the mass of the Trades, was pitted against the Preston employers

¹ Baird's *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie*, p. 188, shows the Governor-General's own disapproval of the high-handed behaviour of a naval commander which was nevertheless allowed to force on the second Burmese War.

² *Illustrated London News*, August 13th.

backed by a sort of Millowners' Federation.¹ What particularly angered Labour opinion in the conduct of the Preston employers was their refusal to negotiate with the Spinners' and Weavers' Committees and their resort to a lock-out of some 20,000 operatives so that their mills might not be "brought out" in detail. Their truculence certainly cost the masters dear for the Preston operatives obtained help to the extent of over £105,000 and managed to prolong the contest from October 1853 to May 1854.² The men, in fact, were only beaten because the cotton markets were sufficiently on the decline to induce the general body of cotton employers to offer financial assistance to the Preston mill-owners as part of a plan to bring operatives' pay back to lower levels everywhere.

The Preston strike had interesting consequences. Ernest Jones saw in it a good chance to restimulate Chartism, and Chartists, indeed, dominated the "Labour Parliament" of some forty delegates which met in Manchester early in 1854. This Parliament concentrated its attention on methods that would enable "Labour" to meet the "lock-out" weapon which the masters were now using with such effect. Finally it produced a monster scheme under which it was proposed to ask the entire operative community of the country to consent to a regular levy on wages. Great funds would thus become available, it was hoped, and these would be employed year after year in financing new ventures in co-operative production.

Though the scheme was visionary in the extreme, Ernest Jones supported it warmly in the Chartist organ, the *People's Paper*, and even made some attempts to launch it.³ But the Preston strikers got more help from the London Trades Delegates, who had refused all lot and part in the "Labour Parliament," but met

¹ G. Howell's *Labour Legislation, Labour Movements and Labour Leaders*, i, 99-107, for a painstaking account.

² The principal song of the "Lock-outs," *The Spinners' Ship*, deserves a quotation (*Westminster Review*, January 1855, p. 47):

"Cheer, boys, cheer, be not downhearted, all the weavers loudly cry,
Ten per cent and no surrender, we will conquer, boys, or die.
Cheer up, boys, be not downhearted, be united hand-in-hand,
The Ten Per Cent shall sail all over, till we get our just demand.

"Three cheers for Blackburn's lads and lasses, may you ever true remain,
Strong in union be united, Labour's rights we will maintain,
Cheer, boys, cheer, be not downhearted, all the weavers loudly cry.
Ten per cent and no surrender, we will conquer, boys, or die."

³ See the *People's Paper* file for 1854.

every week at the Bell Inn, Old Bailey, to arrange the despatch to Preston of the hundreds of pounds which were contributed weekly by their Societies.¹ Already there was shaping itself in this regular co-operation of Delegates of the London Trades the basis of a new working-class leadership which would eventually pass over from the economic to the political field. Meanwhile the determination and loyalty with which the Preston struggle was being conducted, served to convince increasing sections of "public opinion" that J. S. Mill was right in his contention that the rôle of employer would become steadily more impossible unless a spirit of co-partnership were admitted into industry. If a falling market had made wage increases impossible the masters, it was felt, should at least have been prepared to demonstrate that fact to the Men's Committees and to such Arbitrators as the men had asked for.

It was in some respects a misfortune that throughout the Preston dispute an ever more exciting foreign situation tended to relegate the "Labour Question" to a minor place in the news. Indeed, some of the "advanced Liberal" elements most favourable to the "claims of Labour," and powerful Chartist elements also, were busy forcing Whitehall on to war with Russia before the Preston "lock-out" had commenced. Thus at the crowded and enthusiastic *London Tavern* meeting of October 7th, William Newton, the leader of the Engineers' strike of 1852, had demanded in the name of the working men of London "rather a costly war than dishonour."² At the Finsbury meeting of October 18th such Chartist leaders as Bronterre O'Brien, Julian Harney, and Dobson Collet went farther and attacked the British Government as well as the Russian. The resolution carried by Collet deserves quoting. It declared:³

That the system of secret diplomacy is calculated to mislead the people of this country, and has enabled the British Cabinet to assist Continental despotism while professing a zeal for Constitutional Government.

Chartist democrats were already part of the variegated coalition of forces which pushed England before long into the follies of the Crimean War.

¹ *Illustrated London News*, December 3, 1853, January 21, 1854, February 11, 1854, etc.

² *Illustrated London News*, October 15th.

³ *Ibid.*, October 22nd.

"Advanced" Politics in 1853

Working-class Chartists and their "advanced Liberal" allies were, of course, hardly concerned with the traditional "Eastern Question" as it was viewed by Palmerston in the Cabinet or by Stratford Canning in the British Embassy at Constantinople. But since Turkey's stand of 1849 against the blustering demands of Austria and Russia for the surrender of Kossuth and his Polish and Hungarian companions, Chartists had come to view the Turks with something of the favour bestowed upon insurgent Poles, Italians, and Magyars. When in June 1853 Russian troops were ordered into Wallachia and Moldavia in pursuance of a new Russo-Turkish quarrel, many working-class politicians were ready to see in the Turks another "brave people" threatened with loss of liberty by the tyrannical Tsar. This was, however, merely to play the game of one Cabinet faction against the other. Palmerston was not concerned with phantom "Turkish liberties," but with preventing the expansion of Russian influence among the Christian populations of the Balkans eager to be rid of their Turkish oppressors.

The result was seen after the long-drawn-out Vienna Conference opened in which Austria, Prussia, France, and England attempted to negotiate a Russo-Turkish settlement. To the immense chagrin of Cobden, Bright, and the "Peace Party," whose Edinburgh "Peace Conference" of October quite failed to stay the growth of passionate anti-Russianism,¹ working-class opinion, impatient of the Vienna Conference's delay in resisting "the great bully of the North," tended to listen more and more to the extremest opinions. Thus that remarkable but notoriously irresponsible Turcophil agitator, David Urquhart,² attracted in-

¹ Mrs. S. Schwabe's *Reminiscences of R. Cobden*, pp. 194 sqq., for Cobden's able speech of October 12th, with its: "I venture to tell you that not only all the King's horses and all the King's men, but all the horses and all the men of all the Emperors in the world, will fail to maintain the Mohammedan population in Europe. There are seeds of decay and dissolution that you cannot combat by fleets and armies. . . ."

² Urquhart had already done some formidable pro-Turkish and anti-Russian agitation between 1834 and 1840, and had then begun his crusade against Palmerston's "pro-Russianism." It has always been something of a mystery where he obtained the money for his agitation of the 1830's and 1840's, and his biographer, Gertrude Robinson, can hardly be said to have dealt with the question. Now in 1853 he began again and in conjunction with his working-class allies founded a movement which might almost have taken the style of "The Union of Democratic Control." The Foreign Policy Committees, which Urquhart founded in different centres, took their duty of acting as democratic watchdogs on the suspect Cabinet with considerable seriousness. The Bradford Committee, for example, outlasted the Crimean War and was still in being in 1857.

creasing working-class support for his view that the Vienna Conference was merely a device of "secret diplomacy" for selling the bulk of the Turkish Empire to the Tsar. Opinion in Paris was almost as misguided, and the Turkish Ministers, doubtless encouraged thereto by Stratford Canning¹ and the French Ambassador, resolved to act independently of the Vienna Conference. When they sent the Tsar a fifteen-day ultimatum and followed it up with active hostilities, the Press and "public" of London and Paris alike gave the loudest applause to this "spirited" Turkish conduct.

The inevitable retribution followed, and the Russian fleet issuing from Sebastopol blew the Turkish fleet out of the water at Sinope. When the British public was thereupon told that the Turks had "fought with a bravery unsurpassed in naval history" and that the Russians had merely indulged in a "treacherous massacre,"² feeling became inflamed to a point which made it almost impossible for the British Cabinet to agree to any issue of the Russo-Turkish conflict which the Tsar would accept. Moreover, struggle as it would, the anti-war section of the British Cabinet was now committed in honour not only to Turkey but to France. If the Turkish Government had risked its very existence because British opinion had shown itself so overwhelmingly favourable, hardly less could be said of the brand-new Napoleonic Empire in France. There Napoleon III would certainly be endangered if, after having advanced step by step with Great Britain towards a "determined stand" against "Russian aggression," he was compelled to beat a prestige-shattering retreat.

But by January 1854 it was obvious that even the British throne and Government would be weakened unless something were done to meet popular suspicion that nefarious "secret diplomacy" explained why the Cabinet majority delayed "action" and continued to parley at Vienna with the Prussian and Austrian friends of the Tsar. The country was eagerly swallowing the rumour that the Queen's husband, Prince Albert, was acting almost as the Tsar's personal agent in England, and an alarming newspaper campaign, begun by the Radical sheets, was increasingly tempting the proprietors of other journals by the profits

¹ Since 1852 Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe.

² *Illustrated London News*, December 24, 1853.

it offered.¹ On January 15th the indignant Greville made the following entries into his Journal:

The *Morning Advertiser* has sometimes had five or six articles on the same day all attacking and maligning Prince Albert. . . . At present nobody talks of anything else, and those who come up from distant parts of the country say that the subject is the universal topic of discussion in country towns and on railways. It was currently reported in the Midland and Northern Counties, and actually stated in a Scotch paper, that Prince Albert had been committed to the Tower, and there were people found credulous and foolish enough to believe it. It only shows how much malignity there is amongst the masses, which a profligate and impudent mendacity can stir up, when a plausible occasion is found for doing so, and how “the mean are gratified by insults on the high.”

On January 21st, after influential representations behind the scenes had recalled part of the Press to its duty, Greville was still angrily writing:²

For some time past the Tory papers have relaxed their violence against the Court, while the Radical ones, especially the *Morning Advertiser*, have redoubled their attacks, and not a day passes without some furious article, and very often five or six articles and letters, all in the same strain. It is not to be denied or concealed that these abominable libels have been greedily swallowed all over the country and a strong impression produced. . . . The Radical papers nothing can stop, because they find their account in the libels; the sale of the *Advertiser* is enormously increased since it has begun this course, and, finding perfect immunity, it increases every day in audacity and virulence.

It is perhaps plain why the Queen opened Parliament on January 31st with a speech intimating “a further augmentation of my military and naval forces,” and why an English ultimatum to St. Petersburg was despatched on February 27th. On March 28th there followed the eagerly awaited declaration of war.

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, January 15, 1854, ascribe the origin to the *Daily News* and the *Morning Advertiser*, and notice the readiness of the Tory *Morning Herald* and *Standard* to join in.

² *Greville Memoirs*, ed. 1888.

THE CRIMEAN WAR, FIRST STAGE

"Our countrymen fancy they are fighting for freedom because the Russian Government is a despotism; they forget that the object of their solicitude is no less a despot; that their chief ally but the other day overthrew a republic, and imprisoned or expatriated the members of a freely-elected Parliament; that they are alternately coaxing and bullying Austria, whose regard for freedom and justice Hungary and Italy can attest, to join them in this holy war, and that the chief result of their success, if success be possible, will be to perpetuate the domination of a handful of the followers of Mahomet over many millions of Christians. . . . There was a time when it was fashionable to have sympathy for Greece. Now, Athens is to be occupied by English and French troops if a strong anti-Turkish feeling is manifested there. . . ."

Letter from JOHN BRIGHT, read to a Manchester meeting, April 19, 1854. (From LEECH'S "The Private Letters of John Bright," pp. 24-5.)

"I certainly object to the Reform Bill now before the House; but so does the majority of the House of Commons, and so I apprehend would the majority of the House of Lords. That Bill would make such great and sweeping changes that its provisions array against it a great variety of powerful interests. . . . My sincere belief is that it would be next to impossible to carry that Bill. . . ."

Palmerston to Lord J. Russell, April 10, 1854. (From "Later Correspondence of Lord J. Russell," ii, 137.)

"We are now in a most critical state, we were at the beginning of a war of which no man could see the termination. Never had any Government received greater support than the present Government had received to enable them to carry on the war. The House had refused them nothing, but had voted large Fleets and armies—money, confidence, everything they had asked for. We had a right to expect from them in return united counsels—we had a right to expect that their undistracted attention would be devoted to the one great object, and these things were perfectly inconsistent with their embarking in the discussion of a measure (of Parliamentary Reform) which would naturally rouse all the passions of the House and the country. . . ."

"Hansard," April 11, 1854. The Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere (Whig) helps to destroy the 1854 Reform Bill.

DURING the year 1853 Lord John Russell had been consoling himself for his descent to second place in the Ministry by thoughts of the Reform Bill which he had pledged the Cabinet to undertake in 1854. Honest as his conviction doubtless was that a further Reform of Parliament would work unmixed good, he was alive also to the claim its preparation would give him on the gratitude of Radicals in the country. That gratitude would certainly be needed to take him back to the Prime Ministership after Aberdeen should have retired. Indeed, Russell allowed his impatience for the Premiership to grow over-obvious even in 1853, several times betraying his half-desire to break up the Government in a way which would permit his return to power pledged to a Reform Bill and to more energy against Russia. But he understood how easily he might commit a fatal mistake which would alienate Aberdeen's Peelite followers and leave Palmerston the coveted succession.¹ A large Radical section in Parliament and the country, it should be remembered, looked primarily to Palmerston for a vigorous foreign policy.² The growing bellicosity of the public temper in 1853 increased the influence of this Radical section as against the Manchester School who preferred Russell as the lesser of two evils.

The tug-of-war behind the scenes before the Reform Bill was finally drafted makes a revealing spectacle. Russell, it seems, took counsel with Molesworth, the solitary Radical in the Cabinet, and through him with Cobden before finally deciding the scope of his plans.³ That possibly accounts for the suggested measure of small borough disfranchisement which drove Palmerston to offer his resignation and induced Lansdowne, the Whig patriarch, to consider the same course.⁴ The High Whigs, in fact, were now much more inclined to resist change than the Peelite Cabinet Ministers who, by this time, had generally adopted the view that

¹ Cf. *Greville Memoirs*, December 12, 1853, for Greville's realisation that Palmerston was now playing for the Premiership. On December 14th he reported Russell's anger.

² *Ibid.*, October 4, 1853: "Palmerston's position is curious. He is certainly very popular, and there is a high idea of his diplomatic skill and vigour. He is lauded to the skies by all the Radicals who are the admirers of Kossuth and Mazzini, who want to renew the scenes and attempts of 1848, and who fancy that, if Palmerston were at the head of the Government, he would play into their hands."

³ Cf. Morley's *Cobden*, pp. 610-11 (ed. 1903).

⁴ Cf. *Later Correspondence of Lord J. Russell*, ii, 123-9.

in Suffrage Extension "the greater the number you can include without danger, the greater is your safety."¹

Palmerston's objections even to the amended plans of January 1854 are worth giving as depicting the state of mind of one who contrived to stave off "organic reform" for more than another decade. Alluding to the current working-class excitement over the Preston lock-out, Palmerston asserted that by enfranchising another "100 or 150,000 workmen" Russell would be "giving great power" to the "agitating but secret leaders" of the Trades Unions who exercised "the most absolute despotism over the rest."²

The direct consequence would be (he added) an increased and plausible cry for Ballot, and the introduction of men into the House of Commons who would be following impulses not congenial to our institutions. We have difficulty enough as it is to maintain our necessary establishments; that difficulty would of course be much increased in proportion as elections depended on men incapable of taking large views and looking only to penny and shilling gains and losses. It is worth your while to consider whether you are not about to produce results which you would be the first to regret. Your measure may possibly give you some small and fleeting popularity among the lower classes, though there seems good reason to doubt whether the balance of feeling would not be against you for not giving to all that which you would grant to a few. But your intended course is openly disapproved by all the intelligent and respectable classes whose good opinion is most to be valued, and you can hardly be aware of the feelings of personal hostility towards you which are daily spreading through all the party which has hitherto acknowledged you as their leader.

Had there been any excitement about the prospect of Reform, the Bill's chances would nevertheless have been far from unfavourable. But "public opinion" even among the working classes had little excitement to spare from the absorptions of anti-Russianism. In December 1853 and January 1854, indeed, the *Morning Advertiser* was leading a chorus of "pothouse papers"³ intent on misrepresenting Palmerston's resignation until it became not an argument for a public rally to the imperilled Reform Bill, but only another weapon to turn against Prince Albert. The "Manchester Radicals," again, though organising eve-of-the-Session rallies at Manchester and Sheffield, allied Reform with

¹ Lord Stanmore's *Sidney Herbert*, i, 229.

² *Later Correspondence of Lord J. Russell*, ii, 130.

³ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, January 21st, and the *Punch* cartoons of January 7th and February 4th.

The Crimean War, First Stage

Peace advocacy in a way which was hardly serviceable to the former. The "public" was already being beguiled by newspaper estimates of the probable speed with which victory in the forthcoming "war against the Barbarian" would be obtained.

"It is not likely," wrote the most extensively circulated "Liberal" sheet in the country,¹ "that the war will be a protracted one. Indeed we do not see how it is possible for the Czar to make head against the Allies for three months after the Baltic shall have been cleared of ice. . . . The loss of Finland might follow the loss of his Baltic fleet . . . and the loss of the Crimea and even of Bessarabia and Georgia might not . . . be long delayed after the capture of Sebastopol. It must not be forgotten, in the calculation of chances against the Emperor, that the restoration of the ancient kingdom of Poland has long been considered necessary. The dismemberment of that kingdom . . . has hitherto been all to the advantage of Russia. If Austria and Prussia shared the spoil, they never gained any material benefit which recompensed them, even to the one-hundredth part, for the loss of honour incurred. To them the acquisition has been nothing but a nuisance and a danger; and it is highly probable that they will be glad to give up their slice of that gigantic plunder, if they could thereby be the means of erecting an effectual barrier against their aggressive neighbour."

Ignorance and irresponsibility, it might be thought, could hardly have gone further. Yet there were already those who were partitioning not only the Russian Empire but that of Austria as well.

Though not born into the most propitious of worlds, the Reform Bill of 1854 was, thanks to the persistence of Russell, presented to Parliament as a Cabinet measure. On February 13th Lord John Russell opened his plan for the total disfranchisement of boroughs with fewer than 300 electors or 5,000 inhabitants and the partial disfranchisement of two-member boroughs with fewer than 500 electors or 10,000 inhabitants. If the plans for redistributing the 66 seats thus liberated offered nothing sufficient to the under-represented urban masses of the great towns,² Russell

¹ *Illustrated London News*, February 11th. Its circulation was over 100,000 (April 8th).

² *Hansard*, February 13th. Yorkshire was to get 4 more members; Lancashire 4 more; and other counties between them an additional 38. Then extra members were to go to the Inns of Court (2), the Scottish Universities (1), and London University (1). Three new English one-member boroughs were to be made of Birkenhead, Staleybridge, and Barnsley, and a new two-member borough of Kensington and Chelsea combined. Thus Russell was only able to offer the Tower Hamlets, Manchester, Birmingham, etc., 1 member more each with an unpalatable provision added for "minority representation." The total of 66 redistributable seats was obtained by adding 4 seats suspended for bribery to the 62 produced by Russell's disfranchisement proposals proper.

hoped to win the favour of the Parliamentary Radicals by other parts of the scheme. Thus the borough franchise was to be given to occupiers of premises of £6 rateable value and the county franchise to occupiers of premises of £10 rateable value; while, in boroughs and counties alike, a number of new franchise qualifications promised to bestow the vote on tens of thousands who were not technically householders but "lodgers." Non-householders became eligible for voting if in receipt of salaries of £100 or over paid half-yearly or quarterly; if entitled to annual dividends of £10 or over from Government, Bank, or India stock; or if paying at least 40s. yearly in income-tax or assessed taxes, holding a University degree or owning a deposit of £50 in a savings bank for three years.

The Bill caused considerable debate among the Radicals. The large measure of Suffrage Extension was very welcome, and the obvious alarm of the Tories seemed one proof the more that the Bill, despite its Redistribution shortcomings, was very well worth having. When Hume summoned a meeting of Radical members, therefore, it was unanimously resolved to support the Bill on Second Reading and attempt improvement afterwards.¹ The improvements indicated were the Ballot and a fairer Redistribution than one which first offered the great urban population a mere 14 of the 66 redistributed seats and then filched 8 of the 14 for minority representation.² The Council of Walmsley's National Reform Association³ also decided on a vigorous support of the Bill "as a large and valuable instalment of the reforms they seek,"⁴ and called upon the country to meet and petition in its favour and pay no heed to the extremist objections of the Chartists. But the National Reform Association, though still supplying 150 provincial newspapers with tabulated voting records of their members, had no longer the power to raise an agitation. In fact, the whole sum of petitions received for the Bill was 18, and these bore only 5,408 signatures.⁵

¹ *Illustrated London News*.

² Cf. Bright's complaint on April 11th, *Hansard*, cxxxii, 852.

³ See *English Radicalism 1832-1852*, p. 315.

⁴ From the Association's four-page handbill dated March 1st. Cf. also the *Reasoner* for March 5th.

⁵ *Supplement to the British Almanac*, 1855, pp. 206-7, which shows also that the Ballot, too, only won 17,684 petition signatures. Yet there were 405,342 petitioners against the Sunday liquor traffic. (The United Kingdom Alliance had been formed in 1853, and in 1854 these signatures helped to secure the

The Crimean War, First Stage

The war, in short, was absorbing the country's interest mightily. What energy there was to spare from war-issues was not stirred by a Whig Reform Bill. Chapelgoers were more moved to petition for the Sunday closing of public-houses or for the inspection of Catholic nunneries.¹ "Labour," on the other hand, petitioned for a ten-hour day in the factories,² for Government inspection of coal mines³ and against projected Government legislation, intended to secure the actuarial soundness of the Friendly Societies,⁴ but actually threatening them with crippling conditions. Issues like these, when added to those arising from the Preston lock-out and the "iniquities" of the Tsar, produced an atmosphere singularly unfavourable to the survival of a "moderate" Reform Bill.

Chartists also played some part in destroying the Bill's prospects by confident demonstrations that it would still leave even the "aristocracy of labour" without votes. A few of these might now be paid at the rate of £100 per annum or even more, but that, urged the *People's Paper*, was exactly why the Reform Bill only allowed the vote when the money was paid quarterly or half-yearly. Under this heading no workman paid weekly or fortnightly would be enfranchised and, added the Chartists, there was but the faintest hope of enfranchisement even under the £6 householding clause for the boroughs. This had been so arranged, it was claimed, that admission to the voting registers was only obtainable after a continuous residence on the premises of between two and three years, or even in some circumstances of between

Wilson-Patten Act for England which, if not such a triumph as the Scottish Forbes Mackenzie Act of 1853 with its total Sunday closing, yet confined liquor trading on Sundays to 5½ hours.)

¹ Protestant fear of illegal detentions or worse, nourished on "revelations" of the Maria Monk order, was raising a formidable movement just then.

² 200,978 signatures.

³ 43,067 signatures. The unceasing fatalities were, in fact, forcing nearer the day of official "safety" inspection.

⁴ The importance of these societies in giving some stability to working-class life cannot be exaggerated. They ranged in size from the small village Sick and Burial Clubs (aided often by the gentry and clergy from mixed motives of benevolence and keeping the poor rate low) to great National societies like the Manchester Unity (Independent Order of Odd Fellows) and the Ancient Order of Foresters, which now numbered over 200,000 and 100,000 respectively (cf. Baernreither's *English Associations of Working Men*). Undoubtedly a great deal of working-class administrative ability was trained in Friendly Society work, and it is interesting to see numbers of Chartist leaders absorbed into it. Thanks, too, to the petitioning of 1854, the Friendly Societies Act of 1855 increased the Societies' scope and refrained from pressing upon them the Government actuary's views as set forth in *Parl. Papers* No. 955 of 1853, and No. 506 of 1854. These views seem actually to have been erroneous as compared with those of the Manchester Unity.

three and four years. Such alarmist figures when put forth by Ernest Jones's *People's Paper*¹ must instantly have dissolved any hopes of a vote in its Chartist readers' minds. Menaced unceasingly by industrial fluctuation, occupational accident, or mere bad health, often without the steady parsimony necessary to achieve even a modicum of counter-security save through the Friendly Societies,² the average Chartist knew that "continuous residence" of this type was beyond his powers.

The lack of popular enthusiasm settled the fate of a Bill whose prospects were none too good from the beginning. On April 11th Lord John Russell withdrew his measure, bowing to the Cabinet view that the conduct of the war against Russia would suffer from the opening of a Reform struggle with the Tories. Among the speeches that followed Russell's was one from Bright which temporarily did something to shake the heady irresponsibility of the war-enthusiasts among the "moderate Liberals." Bright had been no zealot for a Bill which was conspicuously unfair to the huge urban populations of the great towns and the Metropolis. Blaming the Government for the war he yet proceeded to find consolation for it. The Government Reform Bill, he said, had aroused little enthusiasm and deservedly so. But war-taxation was coming which would breed a powerful agitation in the great centres of population for a larger and juster share in the control of Parliament than had yet been offered them. In illustrating his case from the grievances of the metropolitan boroughs, then allowed 18 members for a population equal to that of county divisions enjoying 90, Bright used his most menacing example.³

On this occasion Bright seems to have been more successful in arousing doubts as to the possible consequences of the war than he had been a month previously. Then he had reprimanded the irresponsibility and hilarity which had been shown by highly placed persons, including Palmerston, during a banquet to the

¹ February 18, 1854.

² And even so in many cases not obtaining much. In village Societies "club" night, held in a beer- or public-house, often became the excuse for drinking bouts which sometimes absorbed a third of the contributions. In such Societies, too, bad management was apt to lead to a collapse, and this fate also overtook numerically stronger societies whose paid personnel had attracted new members by offering perilously high benefits or over-facile conditions of entry. It should be remembered that at this date "unregistered" Societies which dispensed with the advantages and the checks of the Friendly Societies Acts must have had a larger membership than registered Societies.

³ *Hansard*, cxxxii, 152.

The Crimean War, First Stage

Admiral about to proceed to the Baltic and usher in a war which might cost the "lives of thousands" and "the happiness of millions." On that occasion, however, Palmerston had been supported by the cheers and laughter of the House when he had begun a flippant reply by jeering at Bright as "the honourable and reverend gentleman" and, on Cobden's heated protest, had gone on to the downright rudeness of speaking of "the perfect indifference and contempt" which he felt for Bright's censure.¹ Now a month later even jaunty Palmerstonians were for a moment driven to ask themselves whether statesmanship was really exhausted by the bellicose Home Secretary's ingenuity in combining the forcing on of the war and the destruction of the Reform Bill with a tricky pardon for sundry Chartist and Irish political prisoners in Australia.²

There was a party in the Cabinet which understood almost as well as Bright that a war with Russia might come to have very serious political consequences in England. Its leader was in fact the Prime Minister himself. He had managed against great pressure to stave off a declaration of war until the end of March 1854 and, after war had commenced, he was anxious for as speedy a pacification as might be. But it was already becoming dangerous to allow a war-excited populace to suspect this. Aberdeen learnt this to his cost when a minor political crisis was produced by a speech he delivered in the Lords defending the general Russian record in the Near East between 1829 and 1853 in a way calculated at once to forward the mediating efforts still proceeding at Vienna and to check the increasing anti-Russian feeling at home.³

But this first storm of May and June 1854 was not nearly as serious as that which began brewing in the early autumn. By that time the newspaper offices had succeeded in chafing themselves and the public into a dangerous temper at the "lack of spirit" with which the war was being conducted. It was a temper the more threatening from the fact that irresponsible journalists

¹ Palmerston had plainly overrated the powerlessness of the "Peace Party," and he may have been genuinely angry about Bright's "bad form" in bringing up in Parliament the proceedings at a non-political banquet (*Hansard*, March 13th).

² Frost, the Chartist "rebel" of 1839, and Smith O'Brien, the "Irish traitor" of 1848, were among those affected.

³ For the first anti-Aberdeen movement see *Illustrated London News*, June 24th. *Punch*, too, had been growing ever more critical. See the cartoons of May 13th and July 1st, the latter showing Aberdeen blacking the Tsar's boots.

had been forecasting the prompt and easy capture of the impregnable Kronstadt by the Anglo-French fleets in the Baltic and a similar seizure of Sebastopol by the Anglo-French fleets in the Black Sea. When the summer ended therefore without the fulfilment of either of these confident prophecies the political situation became troubled even more quickly than Bright and Cobden would have forecast. But the storm was not from the direction they had hoped. A more vigorous conduct of the war was called for than Aberdeen was likely to give, and war-aims were loudly proclaimed such as would have necessitated decades of fighting to realise.

There was, however, still sufficient caution in Parliament and the Cabinet to prevent a break-up of the Government. No "Liberals" were anxious to present the Tory party with a chance of war-time government, and indeed even as an Opposition the Tories had gained from the war an increased power to obstruct "progress." Thus the Government had a Bribery Bill before Parliament in the summer of 1854 which was intended partly to meet the Radical case on the election scandals of 1852 without conceding the Ballot. Yet Ministers had found the greatest difficulty in placing their proposals on the Statute Book against strenuous Tory opposition and had had to submit to their serious weakening in order to get them through the Lords.¹ Again, though over a hundred of the more Radical M.P.s had banded themselves together to require the Government to open Oxford to Dissenters, Tory opposition had prevented the Government's Bill from going further than allowing a Dissenter to obtain the B.A. degree. The teaching, government, and emoluments of the University were retained as Anglican preserves. Finally, a Parliamentary Oaths Bill,² to enable Jews to enter Parliament, and to liberate Catholics from the shackles of the Parliamentary Oath fixed upon them in 1829, failed to reach the Statute Book.

¹ The 17 & 18 Vict., cap. 102, is far from the original Bill.

² Lord John Russell persisted with this after he had given up his Reform Bill. *Hansard*, May 25th, shows a Second Reading defeat of 251 against 247. There was some anti-Romanist support for the Tories from Scottish Presbyterians and English Dissenters. They, too, were afraid of the consequences in Ireland of removing from the Catholic M.P.'s oath such sections as: "I do swear that I will defend to the utmost of my power the settlement of property within this realm . . . I . . . abjure any intention to subvert the present Church Establishment . . . I never will exercise any privilege . . . to disturb or weaken the Protestant religion or Protestant government in the United Kingdom. . . ."

The Crimean War, First Stage

Popular Radicalism, it is plain, had by this time lost all interest in piecemeal domestic reform. It was much more occupied with such large ideas on the reconstitution of Europe as Kossuth was describing to enthusiastic audiences at Sheffield, Nottingham, and Glasgow in June and July.¹ Indeed, Kossuth was immediately invited to Leicester, Newcastle, Liverpool, Preston, Paisley, Keighley, Sunderland, Dundee, and Edinburgh, there also to set out his plans for using the Baltic fleet to promote a Polish rising whose effects would extend to Finland in the North and to Hungary and Italy in the South. A free Poland, a free Hungary, and a free Italy, Kossuth claimed, would be found essential to liberate the European system satisfactorily from the menace of a Russian despotism which had grown the more dangerous from the dependence in which it held the Habsburg countries. By November 29th, when Kossuth delivered another oration to a crowded London audience celebrating the anniversary of the Polish rising of 1830, it seemed by no means impossible that events were moving towards a *guerre à outrance* against Russia.² The nation was at once furious that there was yet nothing to show for the war save the dreadful muddle round Sebastopol and proud of the fighting qualities which had been displayed at Balaclava and Inkerman. Bright's brave attempt³ to stay the rise of war-passion seemed to be leading to nothing but a stream of general abuse. He was hooted and threatened even in Manchester.⁴

¹ These speeches were reprinted as pamphlets and enjoyed a wide sale.

² Cf. *Illustrated London News*, December 9, 1854, for an article on "The 'Nationalities' and their influence on the War." This paper, the shopkeeper's favourite, was now willing to make the liberation of Poland a war-aim, but objected to throwing Austria into the arms of Russia by plans for liberating Hungary and Italy.

³ In the famous letter to Absalom Watkin, dated October 29th. After a first burst of recrimination in the Press (cf. *Illustrated London News*, November 11th) it aroused further attacks in December when it was learned that Russian newspapers were reproducing it extensively (cf. *Illustrated London News*, December 16th, where it was given in full to readers whose sharply aroused curiosity was now sufficient to overcome the "patriotic" scruples of the proprietors). It seems clear, nevertheless, from *Absalom Watkin*, a book composed of extracts from that Manchester worthy's journal, that Bright succeeded in keeping his hold on a large section of Radical manufacturers and bourgeoisie.

⁴ *Absalom Watkin* has under December 18th the following entry: "I attended the meeting in the Town Hall to approve of the War. The League had mustered all their forces—all the blackguards whom they have in their pay—and on the other side Dr. Hudson had intimated to the Protestant Association that their presence was desirable (this sheds some light indeed on Party alignments). The consequence was that the Town Hall was filled long before the hour of meeting, and the people were most uncomfortably hot. At 11 o'clock the Mayor, Mr. Nicholls, took the chair amidst great noise. On this right were the principal

English Radicalism 1853-1886

friends of Mr. Bright, including Dr. Halley, Dr. McKerrow, Davidson, Shuttleworth, A. Henry, James Watts, W. B. Watkins, etc., etc. . . . Bright being called for by his friends, rose, but the noise was so deafening, the mingled storm of applause and reprobation was so great, that he stood for more than 10 minutes before he even attempted to speak. At last he uttered a few sentences, only audible to the reporters. . . . Both sides claimed the majority. . . . There was a large concourse outside, and he (Bright) was cheered and hooted all the way to the League Room. There the mob tried to ascend the stairs and being resisted and some stones being thrown upon them, a sort of battle ensued. . . .”

RADICAL AGITATION GROWS DANGEROUS, 1855

"For the first time in my life I am really and seriously alarmed at the aspect of affairs and think we are approaching a period of real difficulty and danger. The press with *The Times* at its head is striving to throw everything into confusion and running amuck against the aristocratic elements of society and the Constitution. The intolerable nonsense and the abominable falsehoods it flings out every day are none the less dangerous because they are nonsense and falsehood, and backed up as they are by all the vulgar Radical press, they diffuse through the country a mass of inflammatory matter the effect of which may be more serious and arrive more quickly than anybody imagines."

The "Greville Memoirs," under February 19, 1855.

"Practical mismanagement and faults of system have come to light, in extent and in number absolutely stunning and confounding; and the surprise and uneasiness of the nation have been aggravated into positive alarm at perceiving, both in ministers and in Parliament, an apparent entire lack of that clear vision, that superior genius, and that commanding will, from which alone a remedy was to be hoped. . . . Under such circumstances we need not wonder that the people, taking their cue from the Opposition which sought only to discredit the Government, and from demagogues who sought to discredit Government and Opposition alike, should have jumped to the menacing and disheartening conclusion, that all Ministers were corrupt and all their subordinates incapable. . . ."

The "National Review," July 1855.

". . . if our able-bodied orators and writers *will* continue to declare in favour of carrying on the war 'with vigour,' let them at least be prepared, . . . in their own persons, . . . to take a part in it. And to our festive warriors of the tavern and dinner-table school, . . . let me add that . . . if a tithe of the exploits promised . . . are to be achieved, every man of the war-at-any-price party, between twenty-one and fifty, must be prepared to rush to the rescue."

COBDEN *to the "Leeds Mercury," October 31, 1855.*

DESPITE the deplorable muddle of British transport arrangements between Balaclava Bay and the trenches before Sebastopol only seven miles away, despite the follies committed by the Army Medical Department,¹ the military situation was improving when the great storm of November 14th brought havoc and disaster. When French and British battleships inside the Balaclava roadsteads were wrecked and disabled, the fate of the transports outside was naturally much worse. With one monster transport especially, the *Prince*, there sank the greater part of the blanketing and the winter clothing which had been sent out for the troops, and also much of the medicines and hospital stores. Just at the time when the troops with huts and tents ruined by the storm were suffering most it became certain that they would be exposed to many weeks of Crimean winter without sufficient clothing or food.

The first political result of the disaster was not what might have been expected. Ministers put on a bold face, called Parliament early for war-business and adjourned before Christmas with their hold apparently unshaken. It was *The Times*, indeed, which was giving more trouble than Parliament. On December 23rd, for example, the day after the Parliamentary adjournment, it made a fierce attack on the gross mismanagement which had destroyed "the noblest army England ever sent from these shores." "Incompetency," it continued, "lethargy, aristocratic hauteur, official indifference, favour, routine, perverseness, and stupidity reign, revel and riot in the camp before Sebastopol, in the harbour of Balaklava, in the hospitals of Scutari, and how much nearer home we do not venture to say. . . ." The attack was the more dangerous in that *The Times* Special Correspondent never tired of asserting the superior management of the French.

The Times had struck a note with a special appeal to Radical journalists and politicians. They were very ready to believe that the Crimean mismanagement was entirely due to the "aristocratic system" which officered Army, Navy, and Civil Service alike with the incompetent relatives and protégés of the aristocracy. As *The Times* persisted steadily in this Radical note, it is not surprising

¹ It is only fair to remember that in view of the impossibility of establishing a hospital for the seriously wounded at Balaclava this Department was charged with the heavy responsibility of supervising their transport across the Black Sea to Scutari, near Constantinople.

Radical Agitation grows Dangerous 1855

to learn that before long there was a formidable Radical movement for "administrative reform."

Meanwhile, Cobden and Bright were persisting with their courageous attempt to create a feeling which might lead to a reasonable accommodation. Cobden's speech at Leeds on January 17th and the meeting of the reduced Cobdenite Parliamentary group at Manchester on the 19th¹ were events of importance. The Press had perforce to give them ample notice because the Cobdenite view was found to possess an irritating interest of its own for a public baulked of its anticipated victories but very war-like still. Thus at Manchester Bright made a vehement attack on newspaper inflammation of the war-spirit for the sake of profits, and this could not be prevented from reaching the public.² Cobden, again, pointing to the Government's participation in renewed Vienna conferences, asserted that this could only mean that Ministers were prepared to make peace on terms which they did not yet dare to break to the nation.³ "Manchester" Radicalism, in short, deprived though it was of a large part of its normal following, was playing an indispensable if unpopular part in preparing the way for an "unsatisfactory peace." But Cobden recognised that till the fall of Sebastopol should have done something to assuage the wounded pride of a nation which had entered the war with swollen conceptions of its might the chances of peace were poor. He told his Manchester audience of January 19th how much he feared that wholesale slaughter would be enacted at Sebastopol in order to allow the Ministry of England and the Empire of France to throw some halo of prestige about terms that might otherwise endanger their position.

Two restless figures from the bellicose wing of Radicalism, Roebuck and the remarkable Layard, were meanwhile preparing to bring down the too pacific Aberdeen Ministry and substitute in its stead a really "vigorous" war-Government. As an authority on the Near East and the excavator of Nineveh the ambitious and energetic Layard was fast acquiring importance though he had only been in Parliament since 1852.⁴ But it was the better-

¹ Only 11 M.P.s met for an event which in past years had attracted scores, and on one occasion more than seventy.

² See the *Illustrated London News's* defence, January 27, 1855, p. 78.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁴ He had been elected for Aylesbury on almost Ultra-Radical principles, and was the more dangerous from having spent part of the 1854 recess in the Crimea, where he had been an eye-witness of the Alma and Inkerman.

known and more experienced Roebuck who, on Parliament's reassembly in January 1855, took charge of the motion which destroyed Aberdeen's Government. Roebuck's demand was for a Select Committee to inquire into the condition of the Army before Sebastopol. It was a demand the more dangerous from the fact that the troops were now suffering the full calamities of a Crimean winter without adequate clothing, shelter, and hospital stores. It would in any case have been difficult for the Government to persuade the newspapers¹ that everything possible was being done to counter the terrible effects of the disastrous November storm. Yet if the Ministers had held together it is very possible that, despite the Tory eagerness to join in the attack, their case might still have rallied a Parliamentary majority. After all, it could be proved that great war-efforts were being made. And it was plain that a Select Committee which set itself to form a judgement on events at Balaclava might begin worrying the war-departments in a way that would hardly be of service.

But at this stage Lord John Russell, Leader of the House, chose to resign. He had long been irritated that his share in the Cabinet was not larger, he had been baffled in an effort to replace the Peelite Duke of Newcastle by Palmerston at the War Ministry, and he now apparently decided that his resignation would precipitate a Ministerial break-up and his return as Prime Minister. Russell had certainly done his best to conciliate Palmerston, and it was round Palmerston that the bulk of newspaperdom had come of late to build its hopes of an efficiently conducted war. Even among the Ultra-Radical prints only the Chartist *People's Paper* may be found pouring scorn upon the idea that an aristocratic "whiskered wonder" of over seventy was likely to lift the war out of the sloughs into which it had been taken by upper-class incapacity.

Despite Lord John Russell's desertion the Ministers resolved to face Parliament and to resist the Sebastopol Committee. Their fate was now certain, but no one expected them to be defeated and driven to resignation by such a decisive vote as 305 against 148.² Yet these figures give the true measure of the angry rest-

¹ The journalists, revelling in their new power and vastly increased sales, were not likely to give up such profitable cries as "Chaos at Balaclava" till they had to. "Chaos at Balaclava," the title of a principal article in the *Illustrated London News* of January 27, 1855, is a typical specimen of its kind.

² *Hansard*, January 29, 1855.

Radical Agitation grows Dangerous 1855

lessness of the public. Cobden, writing to Bright after Palmerston had prospered better with the formation of a new Government than either Derby, the Tory, or Russell, the Whig, felt certain that Court and aristocracy alike had now been thoroughly sobered into a desire for peace by the plain proofs they had received of the risks they ran from the public's war-moods.¹ For a time it almost looked as if Cobden was right. Even the war-like Palmerston's popularity seemed to wither away as soon as he took over the Premiership. By first attempting to suppress the Sebastopol Committee and then giving way when he was hotly opposed, he aroused popular suspicions without preventing the retirement of three Peelite Cabinet Ministers. On March 3, 1855, the widely circulated *Illustrated London News*, which for years had been favourable to Palmerston, was writing:

The country is in a peculiar temper and looks for victory. Until that be achieved, it will be difficult for any statesman, or set of statesmen, however great their genius, or pure their characters, to conduct its affairs with much profit or satisfaction. Sebastopol must be taken, or discontent will grow into danger; and many things more precious than the existence of a Ministry or of a Parliament will be called into question. The nation hungers and thirsts for Sebastopol. Its capture may atone for the mistakes which have been committed both by the Government and the people; but if that be not sufficient to allay the evil spirit that has been raised, we shall yet have a dreary and dangerous crisis to travel through. . . .

Layard, indeed, backed by *The Times* and many other organs, had opened a dangerous attack on the new Government almost as soon as it was formed. On February 19th he had pointed out that it was composed largely of the same persons who had served under Aberdeen and claimed that what the country wanted was not "septuagenarian experience but more of youthful activity and energy." Only "a thorough and complete reform," Palmerston was told, would now avail to end the national degradation, and when he attempted to rebut Layard's "vulgar declamation against the aristocracy"² by instancing Lord Cardigan's valour in the charge of the Light Brigade his answer had not been deemed very satisfactory.

On March 1st, again, just when he had succeeded in reconstructing his Government after the three Peelite resignations, Palmerston was once more harassed by a very influentially sup-

¹ Morley's *Cobden*, p. 635.

² *Hansard*, February 19th.

ported motion seeking to abolish the system under which Army promotion depended principally on an officer's ability to "purchase" his way upward as he advanced in seniority.¹ As the failures of the army were being attributed almost entirely to the type of aristocratic senior officer who had made his way by "purchase,"² the cry for merit as the only test for future promotion had come to be a formidable one. Indeed, there was much support for what had been little more than a Chartist³ contention earlier on, the need to provide every facility for merit to rise from the ranks to commissioned grades. With Tory help Palmerston certainly defeated the army promotion resolution by 158 votes against 114. But even Tories seemed to feel that if deserving rankers were to be shut out from all hope of winning commissions because of the "practical difficulties" involved,⁴ they should be offered something more than the mere "order of merit" which Palmerston had been driven to suggest. An "order of merit"⁵ for a ranker ought at least to be accompanied by something tangible like double pay and double pension.

The attacks upon the "aristocratic system" were soon to spread from the War Departments to all the offices of Government. It so happened that energetic Radical politicians of the order of Layard⁶ and W. S. Lindsay, men anxious to make a stir quickly

¹ The motion was made by Lord Goderich (later Marquis of Ripon and reforming Viceroy of India). He was thought of as a possible Prime Minister of the "advanced Liberal" future. The son of an ex-Premier, he had helped the Christian Socialists with their co-operative workshops and had subscribed to strike-funds.

² *Punch*, February 24th, has a mordant cartoon very representative of the bitter public feeling on Army Purchase. For *Punch's* strong approval of Layard's activities see the numbers of *Punch* for March 3rd and 10th.

³ *People's Paper*, January 13th, had had a demand for a "Soldier's Charter." It had comprised: (1) Free Promotion by merit from the ranks. (2) Compulsory service in the ranks for every one be he the son of a prince. (3) The abolition of the lash. (4) The abolition of the vile system of promotion by purchase. (5) The equalisation (as between officer and man) of the regulations relating to marriage. (6) A commensurate reward after the period of service has expired.

⁴ It was urged by Conservatives that ex-rankers might find things difficult in the "mess," there might be disciplinary troubles, etc.

⁵ This seems to be the first hint of official consideration of what later became the "Victoria Cross."

⁶ The "moderate Liberal" *National Review* thus summed up Layard in July 1855, viewed, of course, from its own angle: "He has great vigour, much special information and some rare and peculiar gifts. In his 'right place' he is fitted to be very useful; and we have no doubt that the precise *niche* for which nature designed him is somewhere or other to be found. But a more incomplete unregulated, untrained, and inaccurate mind we never watched. . . . He has learned neither how to command respect for himself nor how to pay the respect which is due to others. All this a thorough regular Oxford or Cambridge

Radical Agitation grows Dangerous 1855

instead of waiting long years for Whig "aristocrats" to notice their claims to office, were fortunate enough to have to hand the famous Report on the Organisation of the Civil Service lately prepared by Sir C. Trevelyan and Sir S. Northcote. That Report, based on departmental investigations which had been proceeding since 1849, certainly contained very inflammable material.¹ Some extracts may here be fitly cited:

Admission into the Civil Service is, indeed, eagerly sought for; but it is for the unambitious and the indolent and incapable that it is chiefly desired.² Those whose abilities do not warrant an expectation that they will succeed in the open professions . . . and those whom indolence of temperament or physical infirmities unfit for active exertions, are placed in the Civil Service, where they may obtain an honourable livelihood with little labour and no risk. While no pains have been taken in the first instance to secure a good man for the office (the point had already been made that the possessors of patronage normally bestowed "office upon the son or dependant of some one having personal and political claims upon him") nothing is done, after the clerk's appointment, to turn his abilities, whatever they may be, to the best account.

In short, it is not surprising to learn that as early as March 1855 there was already an Administrative Reform Association in the field pledged to "destroy the aristocratical monopoly of power and place" and backed by the demagogic *Morning Advertiser*.

The winter, too, was ending severely enough both at home and in the Crimea to give the Government more concern. Bread prices rose high enough to provoke discontent among the poor,³ and unemployment and short time were also on the increase. The "Manchester Radicals" had relied just on such war-phenomena

education would have taught him. But in the meantime these deficiencies utterly disqualify him for the finer class of employments, and render him both an unsafe and an ineffective politician" (p. 24). Elsewhere in the article Layard was treated as having attained a national prominence almost equal to Cobden's and Bright's.

¹ That is why the Government had promptly submitted it to the counter-criticisms of "eminent Civil Servants and ex-Civil Servants." Many of these shared the dislike of the larger part of the Cabinet for the "competitive principle" which Trevelyan and Northcote had advocated, or, in other words, restriction of admission into the Civil Service to those who had been successful in a competitive examination open to all of the stipulated age and physical fitness. (Cf. *National Review*, October 1855, for the "moderate Liberal" view on "The Civil Service and the Competitive Principle," after some months of further agitation.)

² The Trevelyan and Northcote *Report*, p. 4.

³ There had been serious bread-riots in the East End on February 21st, and in Liverpool about the same time the situation was even worse (cf. Irving's *Annals of our Time*, under February 21st).

to provoke a peace outcry which might allow the Vienna diplomatic conferences to mediate an agreed settlement.¹ But the very reverse proved the case. While girding incessantly at "aristocratic mismanagement" and quoting the "scandals" unearthed by Layard on the Sebastopol Committee, "public opinion" in regard to the war grew, if anything, still more combative. A perilous movement seemed to be gaining ground which would have committed the Government to making the independence of Poland one of the conditions of peace.² Yet the military position in the Crimea was such that Russia was undoubtedly showing conciliatoriness in giving any consideration whatsoever to the Black Sea terms which were being pressed upon her. "Public opinion," however, was held to be in such a state that even Cabinet Ministers who fully appreciated the position had to consent to break off the Conference when Russia declined to accept terms which could have been represented as weakening and humiliating her. Palmerston had, in fact, written to Russell, who was acting as the British representative at Vienna, to the following effect: "Though some few people here would applaud us for making peace on almost any conditions, yet the bulk of the nation would soon see through the flimsy veil with which we should have endeavoured to disguise entire failure in attaining the objects for which we undertook the war."³

Ministers, however, had been hoping that Sebastopol would not long be able to resist the very heavy Anglo-French artillery that had been gathered against it. But the great April bombardment proved unavailing, and it became necessary to resume the dishearteningly slow process of advancing trenches nearer and nearer to the Sebastopol walls while more artillery was brought from the West. The result was an atmosphere which early in May allowed a second "Administrative Reform Association" to

¹ These Conferences were reopened in mid-March and lasted until April 26th. They were broken off because Russia refused to accept restrictions on her naval rights in the Black Sea, restrictions hardly warranted by the military situation.

² *Abalom Watkin* shows the position in Manchester. Under March 5, 1855, the entry is: "I attended the meeting in the Town Hall to advocate the reconstitution of Poland as an independent nation. . . . The meeting was crowded. . . . All the resolutions were passed unanimously."

³ *Later Correspondence of Lord John Russell*, March 28th (ii, 201). Much badgering of the Government eventually elicited from Russell (*Hansard*, June 6th, answer to Milner Gibson) the fact that at Vienna he had considered the final mediatory suggestions of Austria acceptable but that on his return home he had bowed to the views of his colleagues that they would not lead to "a safe peace."

Radical Agitation grows Dangerous 1855

be floated under the most distinguished City auspices¹ and corresponding organisations to be established in most of the principal centres of the Kingdom. At all the meetings that followed "aristocratic mismanagement" was freely denounced.² At Birmingham, for example, George Dawson, the lecturer and preacher, denounced the greed, rapacity, selfishness, and graspingness of the "governing classes" to a great and approving audience. In a "very crowded" Finsbury meeting, again, the strong local Chartist and Ultra-Radical movements allied themselves gladly with the agitating middle-class "Administrative Reformers." That explains the character of the resolutions unanimously adopted when put by the Chairman, one of Finsbury's Radical M.P.s. They ran:

That the disasters of the Crimean expedition are mainly attributable to the incapacity of Her Majesty's Ministers, the corruption of the House of Commons and the general inefficiency of the public service—the results of the undue influence of the aristocracy in the councils of the Sovereign. That while the only efficient remedy for the principal evil of the State is the adoption of the suffrage and the protection of the voter by the ballot, the meeting heartily sympathises with every genuine movement in opposition to oligarchical government and especially tenders its thanks to Mr. Layard. . . .

In view of these events it is little to be wondered at if Palmerston's position was deemed unsafe and his former newspaper friends prepared to turn upon him. *Punch*, now circulating 40,000 copies a week, depicted him on May 26th as too slight for his post. The *Illustrated London News* with a circulation of 140,000 referred in the following terms³ to his toleration of Cabinet colleagues notoriously anxious for peace:

The nation has had too much of jocularity and jauntiness on grave matters; and Lord Palmerston must declare once and for all his policy and his intentions, so that there may be no mistake in England or out

¹ The great hosiery manufacturer, Samuel Morley, whose political activity had hitherto been confined to Disestablishment and the like, allowed himself to be nominated President of the City Committee of the Association. That meant that money was at once available for agitation, and within a fortnight the Radical and "advanced Liberal" M.P.s were discussing whether Palmerston should be brought down. To save himself Palmerston had at once to issue the Order in Council of May 21st, setting up the Civil Service Commission (Hodder's *Life of Samuel Morley*, pp. 121-9).

² *Illustrated London News* for May 12th and following weeks has ample information. Its proprietor, Ingram, the self-made "advanced Liberal" M.P. for his native Boston, was also finding "Administrative Reform" an easy and yet "respectable" method of rising to prominence.

³ *Illustrated London News*, May 26, p. 498.

of it—among our allies or among our foes. If he do not, he must give place to a bolder and wiser Minister. We may end the present war, and adjourn the next, for a few years, by patching up an inglorious peace: but in that case, it is probable that when war ends Revolution will begin.

Meanwhile, though Palmerston had made a valuable concession to the Administrative Reform attack by issuing the Order in Council of May 21st, that attack was still determinedly pressed. As might have been expected, Palmerston had not conceded what was really wanted, the abolition of "aristocratic patronage." He did, indeed, set up a Civil Service Commission charged with organising Civil Service examinations on lines parallel to those which had been recommended in the Trevelyan-Northcote Report. But the Commission was not to select the pick of the nation from all comers. It was virtually confined to taking some assurance that the old type of "patronage" nominee was not obviously unqualified for the post to which he was being appointed.

Refusing to give thanks for this "thrown bone" of Palmerston's, Lindsay, a commercial "advanced Liberal" M.P., allied with Layard and the Administrative Reform Association, proceeded thus to demonstrate its insufficiency in a strenuous pamphlet:¹

Administrative Reform required open and competitive examination. This was individual and private.

Administrative Reform held it essential that merit should lead to appointment. This Board was to test the merit of those already appointed.

Administrative Reform proclaimed an end to the corruption of Parliamentary patronage. This Board was to pass to the service *the nominees of Parliamentary patronage*.

Administrative Reform required examiners responsible to the public. This Board must be responsible to the secret influences of the Treasury. . . .

In short the Administrative Reformers braced themselves for their great Drury Lane meeting of June 13th, a meeting graced by the presence of 33 M.P.s and intended suitably to prepare the way for a strong "Administrative Reform" resolution to be moved by Layard in Parliament two days later.

Fortunately for Palmerston the war seemed to have taken a decided turn for the better just in advance of the Administrative Reform preparations. The War Office and Admiralty saw to it also that the newspapers were properly impressed with the im-

¹ Hodder's *Life of Samuel Morley*, p. 125. Lindsay, beginning as a cabin-boy, was already on his way to becoming a large shipowner and "merchant prince." In 1854, at thirty-eight, he was elected for Tynemouth.

portance of the occupation of Kertch and Yenikale and the resultant "domination of the Sea of Azov." Indeed, after having helped Palmerston to defeat the manœuvres of Disraeli, to parry the growing desire for peace of the Peelite leaders, Graham and Gladstone, and to insult the "peace-at-any-price" Cobdenites,¹ the better war news² permitted him to win a most signal Parliamentary victory over Layard's Administrative Reformers. As soon as some measure of war-confidence had returned, Layard, Lindsay, and the rest sank in the average House of Commons view to noisy and reckless agitators anxious to elevate themselves quickly from the position of political "nobodies." In fact, not only was Layard's Administrative Reform motion defeated by the disastrous figure of 359 against 46,³ but Roebuck and Layard both were regularly outvoted when the Sebastopol Committee began drafting its Report. What from their hands would have issued as a document inflaming "public opinion" still further against "aristocratic mismanagement" actually became a partial vindication of the Aberdeen Government⁴ so lately hooted from power by their efforts.

The Administrative Reform Association, however, was being managed by a very energetic, wealthy, and pertinacious man in Mr. Samuel Morley. On June 27th he succeeded in staging a second monster demonstration at Drury Lane with Charles Dickens himself as the principal speaker, and the success of the demonstration assisted in keeping the "administrative reform" issue very much alive.⁵ The uneasy restlessness of the public was,

¹ Cf. *Hansard*, May 24th, May 25th, June 4th-8th.

² Malmesbury's *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister* may be quoted under May 29th: "Kertch was taken on May 24th by General Sir George Brown. The Russians destroyed three steamers, thirty transports, and 620,000 sacks of grain. We took thirty transports with their cargoes, and the whole loss of the Russians is calculated at a million sacks of corn, which is almost irreparable to them, as we possess the undisputed command of the Sea of Azov and of the mouths of the Don . . ." Such news certainly seemed to indicate that the Russian Army of the Crimea, still doing its best to harass Sebastopol's besiegers, might be compelled to retire from the peninsula altogether for lack of food.

³ *Hansard*, June 18th.

⁴ So at least it was read by the Tory ex Foreign Secretary, Malmesbury, whose *Memoirs* have under June 20th: "The Report of the Sebastopol Committee was brought up and read in the House of Commons. It is in some respects very fair, though evidently making the best of the case for the late Government."

⁵ *Illustrated London News*, June 30th, for Dickens's very successful speech. The creator of the "Circumlocution Office" and the aristocratic brood of Tite Barnacles inhabiting it had, of course, the strongest sympathy with the Administrative Reformers.

moreover, not long in reasserting itself when the Sebastopol news again became unfortunate in June¹ and when, in July, Russell resigned because otherwise the Government was threatened with certain defeat in consequence of his admission that he had been for a Vienna peace in April.² This apparently constituted him a "peace fanatic" almost as dangerous as Gladstone and Graham, the Peelites, and Cobden and Bright, the Radicals. And even after Russell's resignation had preserved the Palmerston Government from certain defeat at the hand of a combination of Tories and war-Radicals, the suspicion that a number of "peace fanatics" still sat in the Cabinet allowed Roebuck to get a division of 182 against 289 for a Sebastopol motion³ which would have enforced Palmerston's retirement. The motion made the House visit "with its severe reprehension every member of the Cabinet whose counsels led" to the disastrous Sebastopol winter of 1854-5, and Palmerston had of course been a very prominent member of that Cabinet.

The most extraordinary demonstration of the dangerous restlessness of the "public" during the agitated summer of 1855 was, perhaps, the three successive Sundays of rioting in Hyde Park by mobs who had been provoked in the first place by Lord Robert Grosvenor's Bill to put down Sunday trading in the Metropolis. The retaliatory and indiscriminate mobbing to which fashionable society had been subjected while driving through the Park on Sunday, June 24th, had speedily expanded in political importance. On July 1st there was very serious trouble between strong bodies of police and mobs larger than those of the previous week. Bitterly resenting the police violence used on this occasion and the great number of arrests made, the Ultra-Radicals and Chartists of Finsbury, Shoreditch, and Bethnal Green organised almost a mass invasion of the Park on July 8th. Part of the mob's unrulier elements, too, not content with the domination of the Park, carried street-rioting and window-breaking demonstrations against the "hypocritical"⁴ rich throughout many of the "aristocratic" streets

¹ Cf. Malmesbury's *Memoirs* under June 22nd: "Very bad news from the Crimea. The French and English attacked the Malakoff Tower and the Redan on the 18th, and were repulsed with great loss"; and under June 29th: "Sickness in the army is increasing."

² *Ibid.*, July 12th-17th.

³ Roebuck had been Chairman of the Sebastopol Inquiry. The Report had been made on June 18th and the motion which he founded on it, though originally down for July 3rd, was delayed until July 17th.

⁴ The Evangelical party among the "upper classes," the party led by Lord Shaftesbury, and the more earnest "middle-class" Dissenters had long eyed

Radical Agitation grows Dangerous 1855

in its neighbourhood. But the withdrawal of the obnoxious Sunday Trading Bill, the grant of an inquiry into the alleged police "violence" of July 1st, and the comparative mildness of the chastened constables on duty on July 8th all helped to bring this sudden outbreak of mob-violence to a speedy end.¹

Meanwhile a new Administrative Reform Association had been launched under the style of the State Reform Association and with the aim of including those who could not pay the guinea subscription of the Administrative Reform Association proper. Chartist stalwarts, who had been shut out of Administrative Reform meetings hitherto by ticket devices, were able to present themselves in force at the meeting which launched the new Association and it was committed accordingly not only to inquiry into Reform of Government Departments but also into Suffrage Extension, Ballot and Electoral Districts. When the State Reform Association's crowded meeting of July 25th was addressed among others by Ernest Jones and Bronterre O'Brien, it promptly proceeded to put Manhood Suffrage and Universal Education on the Association's programme.²

It seems very plain that a critical war-disaster might well have led to startling changes. There were still Chartist disciples of Urquhart able to carry pro-Polish meetings for the view that Russia would never have subdued Poland at all in 1831 but for the bought compliance of Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary.³ Parliament, too, had been showing such marked restlessness for

with malevolence the complete disregard of Sunday general throughout the working-class quarters of the capital and instanced most strikingly in the great street-markets held that day in the "New Cut," Petticoat Lane, Brick Lane, Club Row, etc., but shown also in the almost universal keeping open of bakers', butchers', grocers' and similar shops. While themselves "hypocritically" keeping coachmen at work taking them for Sunday drives through the Park (not to mention the large household staffs cooking dinners, etc., even in episcopal palaces), the "upper classes" were plotting, claimed the Chartists, to deprive working-class families, living in one room and without the slightest facilities for storing food, of their legal and customary right to Sunday purchasing. Strong "vested interests" among the shop-keepers and the stall-holders were, of course, enlisted in the struggle against the enforcement and expansion of seventeenth-century Sabbatarian legislation. The publicans, indeed, who in 1854 had been compelled to accept 5½ hours Sunday opening only, actually succeeded in increasing these hours in 1855.

¹ Cf. Irving's *Annals of Our Time*, under June 24th. The last serious disturbances were apparently on Sunday, July 23rd (see *Annual Register* for 1855).

² *Illustrated London News*, July 28th.

³ *Ibid.*, August 11th, p. 167. For Urquhart's own campaign of July in Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, Bradford, etc., see *Illustrated London News*, July 21st, p. 90.

months before its prorogation on August 14th as to make it certain that bad war-news would have caused an instant demand for profound changes. Nor is it possible to forget that, even with favourable war-news, there was still a recrudescence of mob-rioting in Hyde Park during October and November when bread prices were rising,¹ and that similar uproar, led by Chartists, occurred in Birmingham and the Black Country.²

The occupation of Sebastopol by the Allies, known throughout England by September 11th thanks to the telegraph, had nevertheless deprived the political situation of its most explosive possibilities. Yet there was still to be difficulty enough in bringing down newspaper writers and the "public" from dreams of dictating a conquerors' peace to Russia which should deprive that Empire of vast territories. In fact, after the first glow of newspaper satisfaction following on the capture of Sebastopol had passed away, journalistic impatience began rising once more. Why was not the whole Crimean peninsula being cleared of Russians? it was asked.³ Could not the Navy take Kronstadt and so balance the glory which the French had gained at Sebastopol? Indeed, it began to be widely felt that as it had been the French assault which had led to the fall of Sebastopol while the British attack had been repulsed, the nation's prestige would suffer if peace should be made before there had been a striking British feat of arms.

To the dismay of his colleagues Palmerston, too, began urging a resounding end of the war and seemed to be thinking in peace terms which, according to the less optimistic members of the Cabinet, would require several campaigns more. He was being assured by the Press that he could have a General Election which would give him a Parliament after his own mind, one from which Cobden, Bright, Gladstone, and all the other supporters of a "premature" or "cowardly" peace would be conveniently eliminated. The Press, indeed, was keeping a vigilant guard for him

¹ *Annual Register Chronicle*, pp. 157-8.

² *Illustrated London News*, November 10th and 17th.

³ *Ibid.*, November 24th, pp. 604-5. Even better-informed writers like those of the *National Review* (October 1855) had written: "The Crimea, therefore, we are clear, ought to be taken from Russia, and should never be given back to Russia. . . ." In July they had actually been putting forward Sardinia as the future owner of the peninsula. But just as they had never explained then how Sardinia was to hold it permanently against the Russian Empire, so now they altogether under-rated the power and determination of the great Russian army still in occupation of the whole Crimea outside the nearer vicinity of Sebastopol.

Radical Agitation grows Dangerous 1855

on the "New Coalition" which was alleged to be forming to force an unsatisfactory peace on an unwilling country, a Coalition led by Gladstone, Disraeli, and Bright.¹

It was doubtless fortunate for England that the real command of the war position was not with Palmerston. Napoleon's troops in the Crimea greatly outnumbered the English, and Napoleon himself, after he had obtained the "glory" which would strengthen his régime, lent an ever more attentive ear to advisers who reminded him of the heavy costs and growing unpopularity of the war in France.² Arrangements between France and Austria virtually forced Palmerston's hand and initiated negotiations with Russia which allowed a Peace Conference to gather in Paris in February 1856. Yet Palmerston had actually thrown out feelers in the Cabinet to find out who would follow him in continuing the war even without France. And Cobden, conscious that follies of this kind might be very popular, had been moved to issue in January 1856 the pamphlet *What Next! and Next?* in an effort to stop the dangerous game of expanding the war's objectives until "at least three years' continuance of war" should have been made inevitable.

Though the great majority of reputable politicians were agreed on the inadvisability of prolonging the war, it was for some time doubtful whether they would dare to assert themselves against the Prime Minister's popular pugnacity and a Press that was still badly out of hand. The following extract from a "proprietor's special article" in the Ultra-Radical *Reynolds's*, a weekly now selling 100,000 copies every Sunday,³ will give an idea of some of the Press influences at work:

I do firmly believe that if the present hostilities be prolonged, they will lead to great advantage to Britain and the world. Yes—for I believe that the continuation of the war would force upon the Government the necessity of making those changes in our naval and military systems which alone can give real effect to the valour of our soldiers and sailors and enable us to reconquer the *prestige* which we have lost, so that we may once again become a truly great and independent power instead of disgracefully hanging on to the coat-tails of the usurper of France. I believe likewise that in the progress of warlike events there would arise opportunities for the down-trampled nationalities of Italy, Hungary

¹ Cf. the *Punch* cartoons for October 24th, November 3rd, etc.

² The *Greville Memoirs*, December 26, 1855, and January 22, 1856.

³ *Reynolds's*, December 28, 1855.

and Poland to raise their heads; and finally that so signal a blow might be dealt at Russia as to paralyse her effectually for generations to come.¹

The Peace, indeed, when it finally came in the spring, was far from popular despite the relatively humiliating terms which Palmerston's obstinacy succeeded in imposing upon Russia. For months before the Peace was announced the Ultra-Radical Press was denouncing it as the summit of the humiliations which a disgracefully incompetent and treacherous aristocracy had imposed on the nation. When it came, there was truculent mourning over the spectacle of "a great nation, ruled, thwarted, flouted, plundered, and dishonoured by a man, not naturally of a capacity superior to the average Church warden."² Even more moderate "Liberal" organs like the *Illustrated London News* had but scant welcome for the Peace, overlooking as they did the many problems Russian resentment already threatened for the future.

A very representative "Liberal" opinion was, in fact, that voiced amid great applause by Layard³ on the occasion of his installation as Lord Rector of Aberdeen (March 26th):

"I have no confidence," he said, "that the present peace will be upon the whole a satisfactory one, and there is scarcely a man to be found from Land's End to John o'Groats but would like another year of war (Great cheering), and for these reasons—first, the political aspect of the question does not warrant us to expect a lasting peace—and second, because there is a general impression that now we are fully prepared for it, another year's war would show the world that there is that in Englishmen which would conquer every difficulty (Cheers). If we have peace now, matters will be left in pretty much the same state as that in which we found them. (Hear.)"

¹ *Reynolds's*, January 20, 1856. It should be added as showing the strange kind of thinking being indulged in on foreign affairs that there was even talk of declaring war on Austria and Prussia (*Greville Memoirs*, January 22, 1856). This was partly because they had refused participation in the war, partly to clear the ground better for a gigantic liberation of nationalities.

² *Ibid.*, May 11th. It was Palmerston, of course, who was being thus described.

³ *Illustrated London News*, March 29th.

PALMERSTON HOLDS RADICALISM IN CHECK

"With regard to the promised Reform, let me warn you to look not more to the question of the franchise than to the other arrangements of the measure. It would be easy to double the number of electors, and at the same time to increase the aristocratic influence in Parliament. To give votes without giving representatives in some fair degree in proportion to the votes is but to cheat the people: and to give a large increase of votes without the security of the ballot will subject increased numbers of our countrymen to the degrading influences which wealth and power now exercise so unscrupulously upon the existing electoral body. . . ."

Bright to some Hawick sympathisers, May 17, 1857. ("Public Letters of John Bright," p. 43.)

"The honest and independent course taken by the people at Birmingham (in returning Bright in August 1857 after his rejection at Manchester), their exemption from aristocratic snobbery, and their fair appreciation of a democratic son of the people, confirm me in the opinion I have always had that the social and political state of that town is far more healthy than that of Manchester; and it arises from the fact that the industry of the hardware district is carried on by small manufacturers, employing a few men and boys each, sometimes only an apprentice, whilst the great capitalists in Manchester form an aristocracy. . . . The great capitalist class formed an excellent basis for the Anti-Corn Law movement, for they had inexhaustible purses, which they opened freely in a contest where not only their pecuniary interests but their pride as an 'order' was at stake. But I very much doubt whether such a state of society is favourable to a democratic political movement. . . ."

Cobden to Joseph Parkes, August 9, 1857. ("Morley," p. 663.)

"It is a terrible business, this living among inferior races. I have seldom from man or woman since I came to the East heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come to the world. Detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the object. . . ."

"Lord Elgin's Journals" (*under August 21, 1857*).

ON July 25, 1856, prior to a prorogation of Parliament which was to last until February 3, 1857, Disraeli made a disparaging review of the Government's Sessional record of domestic legislation. He did more. He claimed that a so-called "liberal" Government was carrying out a Conservative policy which would have been better left in Conservative hands. Though Palmerston reminded Disraeli that some of the Government's legislative shortcomings were due to Conservative "obstruction," there was much truth in "Dizzy's" taunt and there was to be more before the Palmerstonian régime was ended in 1865. Long before that date it had become the Tory policy to assist the aged Palmerston to withstand the reform pressure of the Government Benches behind him. Not to turn him out but to keep him in as the surest dam on Radical Reform, was very often the political strategy adopted during these years by Lord Derby, the Conservative leader.¹

One of the troubles of the Radical Parliamentarians was, of course, a public apathy towards subjects which had been discussed for a quarter of a century already without any apparent decline of Conservative power to keep them from the Statute Book. Thus the Ballot debate, initiated by Berkeley on May 20th, had ended with the usual Tory-Whig majority of 151 against 111. An even more decisive Tory-Whig majority of 163 against 93 had ended the Church of Ireland debate opened by Miall on May 27th. And if Church Rates Abolition now showed such a "progressive" Second Reading majority as 221 against 178,² if a disguised "Jew Bill" (framed also to meet the Catholic grievance as to the restrictions imposed upon their political action by the Parliamentary Oath devised for them in the High Tory days of 1829) won a majority of 230 against 195 as an Oath of Abjuration Bill,³ it was obvious that it might be long before the agitated atmosphere in home politics returned which would give them a chance in a

¹ Cf. George Saintsbury's *Earl of Derby*, p. 126: "It was long known to a few, and suspected by others who studied politics, that there was something like a regular understanding between Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston during the Long Parliament which only ended by effluxion of time in 1865. The facts are now accessible to all in Lord Malmesbury's *Memoirs*."

² *Hansard*, March 5th. Lord Palmerston and virtually all the Government Whigs supported the Radicals and "advanced Liberals" on this question. They seem to have hoped that it would weaken the Disestablishment cry.

³ *Ibid.*, April 9th.

Palmerston holds Radicalism in Check

now very confident House of Lords. Indeed, the Lords had in this very Session defeated a Government attempt to re-introduce the practice of granting Life-Peerages. It was too obviously a practice which might help some Radical successor of Palmerston's mightily in a struggle with an intransigent majority of the Upper House.¹

A careful perusal of the 1856 *Hansard* will reveal some special causes of Radical weakness. The war, for example, had opened up almost an unbridgable gulf between "peace-at-any-price" Cobdenites and the pro-war Radicals, and the pro-war majority in its turn was divided between those ready to trust Palmerston and those who with Layard had attempted to use the public dissatisfaction of 1855 to turn out Palmerston too. Even so the divided Radical groups might have been persuaded to effect occasional moments of harmonious reunion on domestic reform if a sufficiently respected party-Chairman had been available. With the death of Joseph Hume, however, in February 1855 the chance of securing such a Chairman seemed to have passed for years to come. Finally, for all their temporary unpopularity, Cobden and Bright, still accepted universally as figures of first-class political importance, would even in 1856 have been admitted to be the ideal Radical spokesmen on the considerable Education debates of the Session. But Bright, smitten by nervous collapse in January as a result of his brave struggle against the war, and Cobden, put out of action by a heavy domestic affliction early in April, were unavailable for the rest of the Session.²

¹ In constitutional histories the Life-Peerage controversy often figures as the Wensleydale case. The Palmerston Government had, of course, no intention of smoothing the way for a future Radical Premier at odds with the Lords. Ministers had only sought to strengthen the House of Lords as the ultimate Court of Appeal by beginning the practice of offering Judges Life-Peerages whenever there seemed a danger of a decline in the number of Law Lords. There was a good deal of mediaeval precedent to justify the Ministers; Life-Peerages, too, did not threaten to swell the permanent numbers in the Lords; and, finally, Palmerston and the rest were no doubt aware what a task a future Radical Prime Minister might have if he tried to bring pressure upon the Crown to expand the precedent of creating a single judicial Life-Peer on an occasion of threatened judicial emergency into a justification for "swamping the Lords" by a wholesale creation of political Life-Peers. But the Conservative majority in the Lords resolved to protect itself even against remote dangers and even at the cost of a permanent diminution of the Royal Prerogative. Lord Wensleydale was denied his seat until he was given a normal peerage.

² Cf. G. M. Trevelyan's *Life of John Bright*, p. 254: "Bright used to attribute his illness to the misery which he had endured during the Crimean War . . . in our day it would be popularly called a 'nervous breakdown.' " Its first symptoms, indeed, were remarked after he had finished addressing a crowded meeting

In their absence important Radical points of view on the future of National Education were none too effectively represented in the course of some of the most significant debates of 1856. Lord John Russell, the Whig, and Sir John Pakington, the Tory, had combined to press upon Parliament the nearest approach yet envisaged by orthodox "statesmen" to a National Scheme of Education. It was a scheme which would have divided England and Wales into eighty educational divisions with a sub-inspector to each; strengthened the powers of the Charity Commissioners to divert misused Charity resources into Education, elementary and "middle class"; and permitted compulsory school rates in those parishes or parts of parishes where an incurable deficiency of school places existed. Wherever, after January 1, 1858, the sub-inspector of the Committee of Council in Education reported that subscription, endowment, charity resources, and school pence combined were insufficient to provide a proper number of school places, there the Quarter Sessions having jurisdiction was empowered to impose a school rate.¹

It was a scheme upon parts of which Cobden would undoubtedly have desired to bestow a warm Radical blessing. He could have done so and yet have moved his important projected amendment more disarmingly than Roebuck and more authoritatively than Milner Gibson. It was an amendment seeking to confine such schools as should in future be aided from the rates virtually to the "non-sectarian" religious teaching of the post-1870 board-schools. Along such lines, doubtless, there could have been won over to the support of "public education" that influential part of Radicalism's constituency in revolt against it largely because it had hitherto seemed in the main to consist of huge subventions from the taxes to Church schools, teachers, and training colleges.

Though Cobden never moved his amendment and Russell accepted great modifications of his plans in an effort to stay Conservative opposition, a majority of 260 against 158 finally forbade the suggested new educational "advance."² The great bulk of Conservative Anglicans, still fearful of the dangers which

in the Corn Exchange, Manchester, on January 28, 1856. And it was severe enough to keep him out of politics until 1858.

Cobden's misfortune was the death of his only son and the subsequent nervous collapse of his wife. Only Cobden's devoted attention saved her reason (cf. Morley's *Cobden*, pp. 644-50).

¹ *Hansard*, March 6th, for Russell's Education resolutions and April 11th for the commencement of the debates.

² *Ibid.*, April 11th.

Palmerston holds Radicalism in Check

might issue from educating the "poor above their station," had been most suspicious of some of Russell's bolder suggestions—those, for example, of allowing free schooling in some cases and of permitting part-time and evening education up to the age of fifteen. Moreover, there was still a powerful party of Dissenting Radicals, led by Sturge and Samuel Morley outside the House and Miall within, who wanted no truck with the Committee of Council's sub-inspectors and actually desired to abolish the Committee of Council itself. It was a party which detested the operations of the Committee not merely because their effect had been grossly to favour the Church. Even if the Committee had mended its ways and distributed State Aid in fairer proportions than 86 per cent to Church schools and 14 per cent to the rest,¹ this party would still have objected. A State Committee was bound to enter the educational field with Erastian purposes which could only serve to deaden "real religion" and freeze the wealth of private enthusiasm and subscription that would otherwise have been called out. But it is difficult to see whence would have come the £451,000 to which the Education Vote was being expanded in 1856.² In fact, the Committee of Council on Education had now come to be such an important department that a new Ministerial office was created in 1856. In future the Vice-President of the Council for Education figures as the Government spokesman in the Commons on all matters of educational administration.

If Cobden's authority would have helped Radical causes in the school debates of 1856, Bright's forcefulness would certainly have done them no harm in the important University debates of the year, those on the Cambridge University Bill. The Cambridge Colleges and University had taken a kindlier attitude towards Dissenting claims than had those of Oxford. Accordingly the Government had ventured to draft a much more "progressive" Bill for Cambridge than that Oxford Bill of 1854 which had repeatedly driven the Dissenting M.P.s to appeal from the Government to the House, and not always in vain. But the Cambridge Bill, too, denied the student leave to absent himself from

¹ The Committee worked on the apparently fair principle of allocating aid proportionately to the sums raised by "voluntary" effort. But, as Dissenters were never tired of pointing out, this system allowed the wealthy Anglican community to absorb State aid which should properly have been allocated to Dissenting communities, too poor to raise "voluntary school" funds proportionate to their numbers.

² *Hansard*, June 12th,

chapel prayers even on grounds of conscientious objection, and the Radicals and Dissenters failed to carry any amendment. After a struggle, moreover, they were compelled to see one of their most precious Cambridge gains struck out of their hands by the Lords,¹ the admission of Dissenters to the Senate though without the power of taking part in the proceedings on theological studies. Foreseeing a possible threat to Anglican domination of the University, the Lords closed the Senate's doors once more in the face of the Dissenters.

It cannot, of course, be claimed that the Radical populace outside Parliament exhibited any marked interest in the Education or University debates. After its successful anti-Sabbatarian struggle of 1855, however, it did take a very considerable interest in the timid anti-Sabbatarianism which was now to be attempted by some of the Radical politicians. On February 21, 1856, Sir Joshua Walmsley, braving the electoral vengeance of the Chapels and Churches combined, asked the House of Commons to resolve:

That in the opinion of this House, it would promote the moral and intellectual improvement of the working classes of the metropolis if . . . the British Museum and the National Gallery were open to public inspection after morning service on Sundays.

It was the first time such a proposition had ever been ventured in Parliament, and the explosions of pulpit wrath which it evoked may well be imagined. Hostile petitioning, in fact, was undertaken on so formidable a scale that the total of signatories amounted before long to over 629,000.² It is not surprising, perhaps, that England was saved from a "direct defiance of God" by a majority of 376 against 48.

The battle was moved to another field when on April 13th Sir Benjamin Hall, Palmerston's Commissioner of Woods and Forests and a Radical of sorts, ordered the first Sunday band concerts in the metropolitan parks. It was apparently an attempt made in all innocence to give Londoners some of the pleasures of what the *Lord's Day Observance Society* has always denounced as "the Continental Sunday." Palmerston began by siding with his venturesome colleague against the first protests of the Sabbatarians. But when he received a remonstrance from the Arch-

¹ *Hansard*, June 19th, for some of the House of Commons proceedings on the Lords' amendments.

² *Companion to the British Almanac*, 1857, p. 209.

Palmerston holds Radicalism in Check

bishop of Canterbury himself, the Prime Minister decided to choose discretion as the better part of valour. The ferocious assaults which *Punch* thereupon made upon Canterbury Cant¹ must stand as evidence of what the "advanced Liberalism" of the professional classes could do in reply. The attitude of combative working-class circles is best expressed in the efforts of the Sunday Band Committees which appeared in many parts of the country. Sometimes a really ludicrous situation developed when provincial "advanced Liberals," tied faster to Church and Chapel than their London counterparts, tried to win the populace from Sunday band concerts in open spaces by offering superior concerts on Monday evenings. That, for example, was the position in Halifax during the summer of 1856.² But action of this kind could not stay the sentiment which was preparing the basis for the National Sunday League.

In the sphere of high politics, meanwhile, it can hardly be pretended that the end of the Parliamentary Session of 1856 found the credit of the Palmerston Government standing high. There was still a remarkable degree of general sullenness about the "premature" peace.³ Resting primarily on the fear that England's war performance had reduced her prestige, this sullenness was reinforced by Conservative hostility to the "surrender" of various "rights" of maritime belligerency in the Declaration of Paris and by Radical discontent that Italy should have been "betrayed" despite Sardinia's valuable help in the Crimea.⁴ Nor did it help Palmerston that American politicians should be delightedly taking the opportunity of Britain's Black Sea pre-occupations to "twist the British lion's tail" most uncomfortably on American issues.⁵

¹ See cartoons, verses, etc., in *Punch*, May 24th, May 31st, June 7th, and June 14th.

³ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, August 2nd.

² *Reasoner*, August 3rd.

⁴ This feeling extended even to the "moderate Liberals." Thus the *National Review*, discussing Palmerston's policy in April 1857, affirmed of the Paris Peace Conference: "If the Western Powers had been *resolute* to compel the King of Naples to cease his revolting barbarities . . . a word would have sufficed. In one quarter of an hour England and France might have done that which would insure the rescue and regeneration of the finest country in Europe" (p. 451).

⁵ Cf. the angry *National Review*: "While the terms of peace and even the issue of the war with Russia, yet trembled in the balance, the government of the United States, for purposes best known to themselves, thought the moment opportune for getting up two very pretty diplomatic quarrels. . . . There is no doubt that the government at Washington offered us a deliberate affront; and that Great Britain pocketed that affront."—*Ibid.*, p. 447.

During the latter half of 1856 Palmerston was able to display a "vigour" altogether more to the taste of the public. The Russian Government, relying on the very evident desire of both France and Austria to re-establish cordial relations, had ventured on some interpretations of the peace terms which were possibly exaggerated. After months in which British journals of all political complexions from Tory to Ultra-Radical denounced the alleged "trickiness" of the Russians in dismantling Bessarabian fortresses that should have been handed over to the Turks, Anglo-Russian contention became concentrated on the "Isle of Serpents." Though this island was alleged to command the mouths of the Danube which Russia had agreed to evacuate, the Russian Government, it was claimed, was using the fact that it had not specifically ceded the island in the Peace Treaty to maintain a possession which would nullify one of the principal results of the war.

Before the Russians were convinced that Palmerston meant to fight what would have been a most popular war rather than give way, the Prime Minister had taken an opportunity of chastising Persia. There had been difficulties between the Persian Court and a none too conciliatory British agent. But the real Persian offence was the capture of Herat, a point in Afghanistan from which an invasion of British India could be organised especially if Russia directed the scheme.¹ When a series of easy successes against Persia commenced late in 1856 and was followed by a Russian surrender on the "Isle of Serpents" early in 1857, Palmerston's position as Prime Minister became vastly stronger. A revealing Press comment may be quoted to make clear the wounded national self-esteem which the Premier had helped to heal, a self-esteem that seems to have bled most freely among the lower middle classes and the populace.

"The star of England is once more in the ascendant," triumphantly exclaimed the *Illustrated London News*. ". . . When it was found that Russia emboldened by the leniency that had been shown her, endeavoured to take advantage of her own wrong, and retain, in spite of the obvious intentions of the framers of the Treaty, two points in the Turkish dominions which would have enabled her to dominate both in the Euxine and the Danube, Lord Palmerston, with equal courage and sagacity, threw himself upon the English people, and determined, even though England should fight the battle single-handed, to compel Russia to the

¹ *National Review*, April 1857, for an article on the "Foreign Policy of the English Ministry."

Palmerston holds Radicalism in Check

strict and equitable observance of the contract which was the sole result of a two years' conflict. The result is the Peace of 1857, which is a more satisfactory, and therefore a more stable, peace than that of 1856, because it is unaccompanied by the triumph of chicanery and cheating; and because it has inflicted upon Russia a moral defeat which will do her more damage than the loss of Sebastopol."¹

Indeed, the spectacle of the Press, drunken with its new power and with the profits of war-excitement, had been a most unlovely one ever since the fighting frenzy had risen in 1853. The Press position of 1857, too, was not that of 1853 but one which promised the development of even greater power to sweep the nation off its feet in moments of rising national passion. The possibility of maintaining the 1d. Newspaper Stamp, it should be remembered, had virtually ended in 1854 when the public excitement for war-news had been cleverly enough utilised by the Chartist-Radical Cheap Newspaper agitators to make the end of the compulsory Newspaper Stamp inevitable in 1855.² The penny and even the halfpenny newspaper thereupon became a legal possibility.³ And though in point of fact nearly all the energetic printers and projectors who first rushed in to occupy the new newspaper field had speedily to quit it, their jejune printing-shop productions attracting neither the public nor the advertiser, there was evidence that with proper care in preparing the ground, proper provision of initial capital, and proper recruiting of able and experienced staffs, great success might well be possible.

Unfortunately the London *Daily Telegraph*, the first of the newspapers to achieve marked financial success at the price of a penny, very soon proved that the hopes which had spurred on Radicals like Cobden and Chartists like Holyoake to the Cheap Newspaper combat might have been dangerously illusory. The only conspicuously successful enterprise among the first brood of cheap papers might show a nominal interest in Radical causes. But at bottom it was only concerned in pandering to anything which would promote circulation and proprietor's profits.⁴

¹ *Illustrated London News*, January 17, 1857.

² The story is told in full in C. D. Collet's *The Taxes on Knowledge*. What forced the Government to give way was the impossibility of moving for the punishment of the scores of printers who reproduced the war-despatches and casualty-lists for the very poor in $\frac{1}{2}$ d. and 1d. sheets.

³ The paper-excite was, however, still a formidable financial obstacle which was not overthrown until 1861.

⁴ The story of how Colonel Sleight launched the paper at 2d., how he fell rapidly into such financial difficulties that he abandoned it to his printer and

The Radical "Peace Party" probably made a mistake in allowing the *Daily Telegraph* to establish a firm hold on the id. public before launching their own penny newspapers, the *Morning Star* and the *Evening Star*, in the course of 1856. It appears that the delay was partly due to Joseph Sturge who, though finally undertaking the effort necessary to raise the large capital required, had hesitated for a considerable time in view of previous unhappy experiences with newspapers which had departed from the purposes of their promoters.¹ Once the scheme was fairly under way Cobden did well to warn Sturge and his friends that a paper whose tone would make it a mere expansion of the Quaker *Herald of Peace* would never attain the 30,000 circulation that was hoped for. Prospects too would be better, he thought, without "a too enthusiastic peace man as managing editor."²

Though the *Morning* and *Evening Stars* were conducted not on Quaker but on Cobdenite principles, they were not sent into the most favourable of worlds. In the very year of their foundation and before the embers of the Crimean War were finally put out, the greater part of the "Liberal" Press was already eagerly snuffing Italian war-crises. Early in 1857, again, when news arrived of gross British bullying of Yeh, the Chinese Imperial Commissioner at Canton, the *Morning Star* had perforce to find itself dubbed "the Yehite organ," and later, during the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, as worse.³ Cobden probably soon saw good reason to doubt whether in the existing bullying self-righteousness of "public opinion" an extensive "cheap Press" would not have constituted an added danger. Indeed, Chartists and Ultra-Radicals,

how that printer made it a commercial success by reducing the price to a penny is told in all the standard histories of British journalism. The facts are repeated here to make plain the very naked commercialism of the whole venture.

¹ H. Richard, *Memoirs of Joseph Sturge*, pp. 520-1.

² Morley's *Cobden*, p. 637. Cobden communicated his views through Bright, who always retained substantial influence with the new journals.

³ The *Morning Star's* courageous reporting of the British atrocities in India made it a world of enemies. Here is an extract from its number of November 2, 1857: "Any man who ventures a caution however guarded against the possible excesses of the military, or stretches out his hand to arrest the indiscriminate butchery they are beginning to perpetrate, is straightway assailed as casting a reproach upon our brave army. . . . Already do we hear of their murdering in cold blood unarmed Sepoys who had continued faithful to their salt. Already do we hear of their bayoneting 150 liberated prisoners without any proof of guilt or any form of trial. Already do we hear of their first destroying every man in a village and then violating the women. . . . No doubt anything that may be said in this country now is too late to have any effect on the doomed city of Delhi, where it is to be feared thousands of innocent people, our subjects . . . have perished in terror and agony. . . ."

Palmerston holds Radicalism in Check

after having shown the greatest liberality in pouring abuse on Napoleon III's head during the closing stages of the war, seemed soon after it had ended quite disposed to increase their vituperations to the point which had brought such danger in 1852. Had not the Chartist *People's Paper* scented a wicked plot to destroy England in the very midst of the Crimean War, when it angrily asked why large French forces were being kept at Boulogne at the very time that the British fleets had been tricked away to the Black Sea and the Baltic?¹

Before Parliament was gathered for the 1857 Session the attention of the political world was being increasingly absorbed by the indefensible circumstances in which a naval bombardment of Canton, accompanied by much loss of Chinese life and property, had been undertaken. That the Canton happenings of October 1856 should have roused Cobden was only to be expected. But that the Conservative leader, Lord Derby, should afterwards decide to make them the subject of a Vote of Censure in the Lords is evidence of how completely indefensible they were. When the Parliamentary Session, however, began it was not yet obvious that the Government's fate would turn on the attitude Ministers adopted towards the happenings at Canton. In fact, the most obvious agitation calling for their attention was that against an Income Tax which had been raised to 1s. 4d. in the £ by the addition of the "war 9d." and against which the whole tribes of "advanced Liberalism" had retained a special grudge because it had not been altered to discriminate between their "precarious" professional incomes and the secure incomes of land- and dividend-owners. Very early in the Session the Government felt compelled to announce the surrender of the "war 9d." despite the Chinese and Persian hostilities in progress. Thus was foiled a Conservative plan to defeat the Ministers by attracting "Liberal" votes for a Gladstonian project of reducing the Income Tax to 5d. and promising to wipe it out altogether by 1860.²

On Suffrage Extension the Radical pressure was continued

¹ *Reynolds's* was almost as violent as the *People's Newspaper* on the subject of Napoleon, its anger having returned to the full measure of 1851-2 after he had "tricked" England into the "disgraceful" peace of 1856. See such leaders as "The Infernal Cruelties of Louis Napoleon" (August 31, 1856) and "The Scoundrelism of Louis Napoleon" (December 28, 1856).

² *Hansard*, February 23rd, still shows Cobden and some of the "Manchester Radicals" voting against the Government on the Income Tax issue despite the "great concessions" offered by Ministers.

almost as insistently as on the Income Tax. On February 19th Locke King renewed his effort to give the county franchise to the £10 householder. Lord John Russell, too, gave the project his support and for the first time Sir James Graham, the Peelite leader. A division of 172 to 192 resulted, which was a plain indication to Lord Palmerston that it would not prove easy for the head of a "Liberal" Government to resist Suffrage Extension, however specious the grounds chosen. Indeed, he was warned even by "moderate" Liberal supporters that persistent inattention to Parliamentary Reform would result in his defeat.¹

But Palmerston was about to be given yet another opportunity of escaping Reform commitments. On February 26, 1857, Cobden proposed a very moderately phrased motion on the Canton troubles which led to a celebrated four nights' debate and the defeat of the Palmerston Government in a division of 263 to 249. Conservatives, Peelites, and some of the Irish had allied with the Manchester School and enabled it to outvote a Premier who had chosen to defend the wanton bloodshed at Canton as necessary to the safety of a local British mercantile community always at odds with Chinese authority owing to its disreputable opium activities. But if Parliamentarians were genuinely shocked for the most part by what had been done at Canton, the bulk of the Press was not. In fact it was already completely obscuring the patent truth of what had happened at Canton by argument always irrelevant and often mendacious. Thus in answer to Cobden's charges that Yeh, the Chinese Imperial Commissioner at Canton, had negotiated altogether more correctly and courteously than Sir John Bowring, the British Governor of Hong Kong who had requested the bloody bombardment of Canton by the China Squadron, the British public was informed how "Mr. Commissioner Yeh had tied up thousands of men and women at his place of execution, and had them flayed alive and cut into slices, and that only a little time back the amiable Cantonese tortured a French missionary for three days and then burned him."² Palmerston, indeed, speedily recognised in this impudent Press campaign against "Chinese barbarism" the ideal opportunity of going to the country, and soon after his dissolution of the Parliament which had defeated him the bulk of the "Liberal" Press

¹ *Illustrated London News*, February 28th, p. 176.

² *Punch*, March 7th, p. 91.

Palmerston holds Radicalism in Check

was assuring him of a complete victory over the coalised "Yehites" of England, Cobdenite, Peelite, and Conservative.¹

The brazen hypocrisy of Palmerstonian Press and Platform has to be studied to be believed. Much use, for example, was made of the following farrago of "atrocities," most of them false, which shall be left in the form given to them in the *Illustrated London News*:²

. . . the public learns with horror that they (the Chinese) have poisoned all (sic) the wells of Hong Kong; that the Chinese bakers of the colony have poisoned the bread sold to the English (sic); that the family of Sir John Bowring . . . are suffering extreme agony in consequence; that the life of Mr. Chisholm Anstey has been endangered by the same atrocity . . . and that the whole of the crew of a British postal steam-packet have been treacherously stabbed in the back and murdered by Chinese who took passage in the boat for the very purpose of the massacre. Surely Mr. Cobden, Lord Derby . . . ought to be ashamed of such clients . . . Surely Sir James Graham . . . ought to wash his hands of the guilt of supporting . . . such cowardly and demoniacal ruffians as the Chinese of all ranks from Yeh downwards have shown themselves. . . .

By the time the average elector had done reading his "Liberal" paper the bloody bombardment of Canton had become not merely a vindication of British power and interest, but almost a work of light and mercy. And yet History can hardly find a condemnation too severe for British official action throughout.

The election resulted, as is well known, in the temporary extinction of Parliamentary Radicalism of the Manchester School and in a heavy loss of Peelite and Tory seats to Palmerstonian "Liberals" and Radicals. Optimistic "advanced Liberals" even grew hopeful of large-scale Reform proving inevitable under a Parliament divisible into nominal contingents of 265 Tories and 400 Liberals, the latter extensively pledged at the hustings to Suffrage Extension, Ballot, and the like.

"Nothing but a Transatlantic or Continental War," wrote the *Leader* on April 11, 1857, "both all but impossibilities . . . could save the Premier from the absolute necessity of attempting at least to solve the question (of Parliamentary Reform); it is understood, indeed, that he has yielded to the representations of his colleagues, and to the vigorous

¹ Cf. *Punch's* poetry, cartoons, etc., March 14th.

² *Illustrated London News*, March 7th. Much of the Hong Kong panic here mirrored was completely baseless. Thus the poisoned wells story was not long in evaporating almost completely and the wicked A-lum alone goes down to history among the Hong-Kong bakers.

summons of the electors, and that a Bill combining several points of the Liberal programme is in process of amalgamation. . . . The only danger is lest the Reformers should be satisfied with too small a measure, and lest the Ballot should be a second time sacrificed."

This was something too optimistic as events were very rapidly to prove. Indeed, the *Leader* was in its very next number¹ compelled to write as follows:

The Cabinet has discussed the points of a possible Bill and, it is understood, intends to set them aside in favour of what are called direct measures of administrative and social improvement. . . . It is certain that, up to the present moment, the Cabinet has not decided to propose any genuine measure of Reform . . . it is probable that should any such proposal emanate from the Government there will lurk behind it a latent scheme of stultification . . .

In very truth the Palmerston Government opened the new Parliament not with a Reform Bill but with various suggestions for "practical reform." A plausible case could be made out for the view that a Session begun as late as May 7th would not allow of sufficient time for the carrying of first-class measures like Reform Bills even if the attempt were made to keep Parliament sitting through August and September. A long Session, it could be urged, might be arranged to begin early in the following December, and this would give Reform Bills a real chance. Meanwhile the best use to which the short Session could be put was to carry long-overdue measures of "practical Reform."

This type of "practical" argument has always carried great weight in English politics. It was irresistible when urged by a "veteran statesman" like Palmerston upon junior Ministers of "advanced Liberal" colouring and through them upon the varied Parliamentary bands owing their election to the heated hustings support they had offered the Premier against "an insolent barbarian, wielding authority at Canton"² and his alleged British abettors. Yet when the Premier is subsequently discovered deliberately sacrificing one of the usable days of his Short Session in celebrating the Queen's Birthday and another in celebrating the Derby,³ doubts as to his perfect good faith become legitimate.

¹ *Leader*, April 18, 1857.

² This is a passage from Palmerston's own extraordinary election address at Tiverton.

³ May 26th was given up for celebrating the Queen's Birthday (actually May 24th) and May 27th for the Derby. May 19th had already been used for voting the Princess Royal, about to make her Prussian and "Protestant" marriage, a dowry of £40,000 and an annuity of £4,000.

Palmerston holds Radicalism in Check

"Practical Reform" came, indeed, in the end to be largely confined to a long-overdue Divorce Bill,¹ unusable by all but the very well-to-do, the laicisation of Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Judicature and the nominal acceptance of the principle that further scope might be given to competitive examination in deciding entry to the Civil Service.

But from early in June the public had become increasingly absorbed in the Indian Mutiny and by the time Parliament was adjourned late in August Reform was once more forgotten in the blaze of national anger against the "inhuman crimes" of the rebellious sepoys. To all the mutineers, unfortunately, was ascribed the same guilt as to those responsible for the Cawnpore massacre of British women and children—Nana Sahib and his five hired butchers who were not mutineers at all. Moreover, false stories of worse atrocities still were in circulation during the remainder of the year, stories which Lord Shaftesbury, for one, allowed himself to propagate without due examination.² "Public opinion" therefore truculently approved of those military orders for "no quarter" and those blowings of sepoys from guns which were fated to prolong the Mutiny into the year 1859. For a space, indeed, enlisting for India attracted very unusual recruits to the ranks. And when October 7th came, the day appointed for "national fasting and humiliation," the effect of

¹ Fought with special bitterness in the Commons by the Church zealots, led by Gladstone, and, of course, again in the Lords. Only the determination of Palmerston and his Law-Officer, Bethell, and their threat of going on if necessary into September permitted the final carrying of the Bill, shrunken naturally by the need of concessions, on August 25th. The most harmful concessions made were, perhaps, those which prevented local consideration being given to Divorce suits at Assizes. To confine Divorce hearings to a Westminster tribunal meant, in conjunction with numerous other obstacles carefully placed in the way of cheap divorce, the complete end among the poor and the "lower middle classes" of the hope of ever obtaining legal release from marriage.

² On October 30th Lord Shaftesbury, speaking in aid of the Indian Relief Fund, criticised the Press for its reserve (sic!) in regard to the cruelties practised on British women and children by the sepoys. He had himself, he said, seen a letter from the highest lady in India describing a case in which parents were forced to swallow portions of their own children previous to being burnt themselves over a slow fire. He afterwards retracted this and merely claimed to have heard of such a letter written by Lady Canning. Towards the end of March 1858 it became obvious that even this defence for Lord Shaftesbury would become untenable. Every investigated "atrocious" charged upon the sepoys turned out upon inquiry to belie the narrators of "special horrors." On March 18, 1858, indeed, the Chairman of the East India Company himself protested against the "exaggerated" reports that had been circulated (*Hansard*, March 18, Mangles).

the services was often but to stimulate the madness already roused by the Press.¹

¹ Cf. *Scottish Review*, April 1858, p. 125: "And while the press was thus doing its utmost to pervert the public mind on the subject, there came in next the pulpit; and on that memorable October Fast . . . few, indeed, took a broad and manly view of the case; and, amidst the profuse prayers poured out, in how many, we would ask, were the Indians remembered as misled, miserable, injured, and semi-maniac human beings? and were there not, on the other hand, loud cries for 'blood—blood, fire, fury and destruction'?"

DISTRACTIONS FROM REFORM, 1858-64

"Let your reforms for a moment go,
 Look to your butts and take good aims,
 Better a rotten borough or so,
 That a rotten fleet or a city in flames!
 Form! Form! Riflemen form!
 Ready, be ready to meet the storm!
 Riflemen, riflemen, riflemen form!"

TENNYSON, *Poet Laureate*, in "The Times," May 9, 1859.

"We have a Premier who professes to lead the Liberals and he is about the staunchest Tory in the House. As a consequence he receives the support of the antiquated and incorrigible Tories because he spends more money and obstructs reform more effectively than if they were in office."

The "Beehive," quoting the irate Cobden at Rochdale, November 1, 1862.

"There is some reason to hope that the question of the Irish Church Establishment may soon be again brought practically before Parliament and the nation. A movement to redress this colossal wrong would, from its palpable justice, be likely to unite sincere liberals of all shades; and would most appropriately signalise the revival of the independent liberal party, after its depression under the reactionary domination of Lord Palmerston."

The moderate "National Review," April 1863.

"We have for several succeeding sessions seen the Chancellor of the Exchequer literally raising signals of distress, and inviting the country to his aid in resisting the expenditure forced upon him. . . . Withhold from the Government four or five millions of income (by conceding farmers Malt-Tax abolition). . . . I believe this to be the only process by which we can ever put a check to that reckless waste of public money, especially in obsolete and useless naval constructions, and gigantic and abortive experiments in manufacturing establishments (arsenals and dockyards), . . . and colonial expenditure by which we fool away millions yearly for the defence of communities who are twice as competent to pay for their defence as we are for ours."

COBDEN bidding for farmers' support against Palmerstonian armaments, February 5, 1864.

WHEN Parliament assembled on December 3, 1857, a disturbing financial crisis shared with the Indian Mutiny the first place in the nation's mind. Yet in view of the hustings pledges given in the spring by the great bulk of Palmerston's supporters, it was inevitable that the Queen's Speech should promise that attention would be called "to the laws which regulate the representation of the people in Parliament with a view to consider what amendments may be safely and beneficially made therein." A Reform Bill, it seemed, would now inevitably share with an India Bill the chief legislative place in the Parliamentary proceedings of 1858, and what appeared to make this consummation even more likely was the steadily improving military position in India. Indeed, that wealthy Newcastle Radical, Joseph Cowen, who had long been preparing the ground for a real Ultra agitation on Tyneside, chose the moment as a suitable one for reviving the famous Northern Political Union. Pitmen, it should be remembered, had been given special reason to desire the Parliamentary franchise by the dreadful toll of mine accidents during 1857, accidents which were apparently on the increase despite a "master's measure" put on the Statute Book in 1855.¹ And as for Joseph Cowen, he doubtless hoped that a successful revival of the Northern Political Union might lead to similar revivals elsewhere and a reawakening of the old combative spirit of plebeian Radicalism.

But European politics were again destined to take a turn fatal for "Reform." On January 14, 1858, a number of Italian refugees in Paris bombed the carriage of the Emperor Napoleon as a measure of revenge for the French occupation of Rome. The Emperor himself had a miraculous escape, but ten persons were killed and 156 wounded. It speedily transpired from the investigations of the French police that many of the assassination arrangements must have been made in England where, indeed, the bombs themselves had been manufactured. A strong note followed from the French Government which induced Palmerston to put forward a Conspiracy to Murder Bill increasing the penalties that English Courts could pass upon conspirators plotting assassinations to be executed outside England. It seemed a politic thing to do since in France Anglophobia was threatening to rise high, espe-

¹ Boyd, *Coal Mines Inspection*, pp. 132-6.

Distractions from Reform 1858-1864

cially among the soldiers, and Napoleon himself was anxious to dissipate it by securing some such concession as Palmerston had offered.

Though Cabinet and Opposition were agreed on the advisability of meeting the French point of view—and the more so in that British military resources were largely concentrated in India—there was yet a strong feeling in Parliament and the country that Palmerston had taken the forceful French Note of January 20th much too easily. For once the two leaders of “Manchester Radicalism” back in Parliament, Milner Gibson and Bright, felt able to put themselves at the head of a “patriotic” wave of feeling,¹ and on February 19th Palmerston was defeated and compelled to resign. Bright rejoiced publicly at the “downfall of the very worst Ministry I have known” and held that, when the transition Ministry thereupon formed by the Tories should have been ended, a Government more to be trusted with a Reform Bill than Palmerston’s would take its place. During the remainder of the Session, in fact, Bright played some part in preventing such an early defeat of the Tory Government as would merely have allowed an unchanged Palmerston back to the Treasury Bench.² The Tories, too, preparing as they were under Disraeli’s guidance for a “moderate Liberal” part which should give them prospects of something better than interim government, made some very satisfactory concessions in return. The House of Lords majority, anxious not to see the new Tory Government fatally involved in disputes between them and the Commons, allowed the Abolition of Members’ Property Qualification³ and a limited “Jew Bill”⁴ to reach the Statute Book. For these two very prominent Radical causes at least a few months of Tory minority rule had proved more helpful than many years of faint-hearted Liberalism.

During the Recess Bright made his wonderful effort to convert the question of thoroughgoing Parliamentary Reform into the

¹ The French Government’s Note was resented as undertaking interference in British domestic affairs and matters became worse on the publication in England of numerous gasconading resolutions adopted by units in the French Army.

² *Hansard*, May 18th.

³ By the 21 Vict., cap. 26.

⁴ The 21 & 22 Vict., cap. 49. By this Bill either House was free to allow a Jewish member-elect to omit “on the true faith of a Christian” from the form of the Parliamentary Oath. The House of Lords was therefore still free to exclude such Jewish Peers as might be subsequently created, and even in the Commons the elected Jewish representative of a constituency had to plead every Session almost *in forma pauperis* for leave to take his Oath.

dominating issue of the 1859 Session. Such speeches and scenes as those at Birmingham between October 27th and 29th, at Edinburgh on November 20th, at Manchester on December 10th, at Glasgow on December 21st, and at Bradford on January 17th did, in fact, light up a Reform enthusiasm such as had not been seen for a long time.¹ Bright of set intention did not mince his words, and his assaults on the House of Lords seem to have been received with special relish by all his audiences. From this time forward working-class Radicals eagerly accepted Bright's leadership on the Suffrage Question, resigning themselves perforce to that final collapse of organised Chartism which followed on Ernest Jones's reluctant surrender towards the end of 1858 of his seven years of unremunerative party journalism.²

While Bright had been campaigning in the country, a serious effort was being made by middle-class Radicals to provide their great orator with the nucleus of a supporting organisation. The very energetic and very wealthy Samuel Morley, who had financed and directed the agitation of the Administrative Reform Association of 1855-6, set on foot a Parliamentary Reform Committee. In November that Committee called a Reform Conference, and from the Conference went out an authoritative request to Bright asking him to prepare a thoroughgoing Reform Bill on which Radicalism might be ready to make its stand during the debates of 1859.³

¹ G. B. Smith's *Life and Speeches of John Bright*, i, 282-95 for the meetings and Bright's *Speeches on Public Policy*, pp. 277-317 for the text of three of the speeches. Bright appears in *Punch* cartoons on November 6th, December 18th, December 25th, January 15th, January 29th, February 5th, March 12th, March 19th, March 26th, April 9th, and April 30th, and far from unfavourably. The "moderate Liberal" *National Review*, which may be taken as representative of large sections of opinion in Parliament, professed by April 1859 to be relieved at Bright's comparative failure to produce a semi-revolutionary situation. It wrote: "When, indeed, is agitation so little likely to be successful in rousing a democratic cry as now? A most able agitator has tried to rouse one and has failed. . . . Trade is steady and improving; industry is profitable; everybody is contented that ever will be contented. . . . If we are to have monster meetings on the subject (of reform), let them be meetings of well-fed men . . . Mr. Bright's friends will get tired of the subject, as other people are tired of it. . . . What a contrast is his present following to that of the Anti-Corn-Law League! He may fill rooms as large; he may have a few audiences as "respectable" to listen to his orations. Idle people must be somewhere. But where are the large subscriptions, the disciplined organisations, the *air of business* . . . observable fourteen years ago?" (p. 561).

² The *People's Paper* died in September 1858 and the *London News*, a final venture, in November 1858. Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* of 1860 and onwards was never, like these, a party organ proper.

³ Cf. Leech's *Public Letters of John Bright*, pp. 70-1

Distractions from Reform 1858-1864

Meantime the Tory Cabinet had been wrestling with the problem of producing a "safe" Reform Bill of its own. As was, perhaps, inevitable it got into the greatest difficulties, and it is only surprising that the production of the final draft, ludicrously below the Radical demand though it was, was attended by no more than two Cabinet resignations.¹ Yet the Disraeli Reform Bill, though making sundry "safe" concessions to Radical claims, contained provisions which might actually have strengthened the Parliamentary power of the few hundred members of the Carlton Club. While Bright, for example, was demanding the total suppression of the representation from fifty-six petty boroughs and the half-suppression of that from thirty more so that their members might be given to under-represented urban and industrial populations, the Government was proposing a disfranchisement involving a puny total of fifteen seats, all of which, too, were to be reallotted to "populous counties."² If, again, £10 occupiers were to be enfranchised in the counties, and in the boroughs the holders of Government, Bank, or India stock of £10 per annum, Government pensioners of £20 per annum and Savings Banks depositors of £60,³ there was also mention of Boundary Commissioners who were to rearrange borough boundaries "according to the altered circumstances of the times." Apparently one of the main functions of these Commissioners might come to be the thrusting into the already scandalously under-represented industrial boroughs of those suburban populations which had long worried the "landed interest" by yielding an order of county voter not sufficiently "under influence."⁴ Manchester and Liverpool, that is, instead of having the six members each claimed for them by Bright were to see their two

¹ Cf. Malmesbury's *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister* under December 3rd, February 8th, February 9th, and March 3rd.

² Disraeli had long been a skilled manipulator of population statistics affecting to prove that it was rather the counties that were under-represented. Despite the large industrial populations of many county divisions, too, it was the Tory cue to claim that Parliament had in 1832 meant the county division to be reserved for the representation of "the agricultural interest."

³ *Hansard*, February 28th, Disraeli. He announced also that University graduates, ministers of religion, members of the medical and legal professions and certain classes of schoolmasters would be given the vote without question of rating or other qualifications. This was, of course, "safe" Suffrage Extension.

⁴ The "landed interest's" control of county divisions was meanwhile being further secured by the clause which thrust out from the county registers the forty-shilling freeholder whose county qualification came from a freehold held within the limits of a Parliamentary borough.

members doing duty for even larger populations. One last instance of the Tory strategy implicit in the Bill must serve for all, the provision allowing electors to send in voting papers instead of voting in person. It favoured the Tory plural voter and also the Tory who did not care to face that plebeian display at polling-booth entrances and exits which had in a sense to be reckoned as a partial set-off to the advantage gained by the Tories in refusing the Ballot.

The main Parliamentary battle was, however, closed on none of the points already instanced but on the Bill's non-provision for a large working-class addition to the borough electorates through a reduction of the householding qualification. As Lord John Russell's Bills of 1852 and 1854 had committed most Whigs virtually to Household Suffrage in the boroughs, a Whig-Radical alliance was easily constructed behind a motion of Lord John Russell's declaring "that no readjustment of the franchise will satisfy the House or the country, which does not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage than is contemplated in the present measure."¹ Made on March 21st this motion was after long debates carried against the Government on March 31st by a majority of 330 against 291. Availing themselves, however, of the precedent set by Palmerston after his defeat in 1857, Ministers resolved on a General Election. They regained some of the county seats they had lost during the Yehite excitements of 1857 but proved unable to defeat a No Confidence resolution moved on June 7th at the very opening of the new Parliament.

Yet that the Tory Government should only have been ejected by a narrow majority in a House dividing at 325-313 argued no remarkable prospects for Radical Reform in the new Parliament. The omens grew no better when Palmerston rather than Russell emerged as the "Liberal" Prime Minister and when a new wave of panic suspicion of Napoleon III's ultimate designs followed on his tricking Austria into the Italian War of 1859.² Palmerston, it is true, had learnt something from the successive defeats inflicted upon him by the Manchester Radicals in 1857 and 1858. He was most anxious, for example, to persuade Cobden into the

¹ The motion also contained a reprobation of the Government's proposed treatment of that protégé of Whig and Radical alike, the 40s. od. freeholder of the county divisions.

² *The Times* had already printed Tennyson's *Riflemen Form!* on May 9th. Its most typical verse is quoted at the head of this chapter.

Distractions from Reform 1858-1864

Cabinet though that statesman after an interview decided that he could not serve under a Prime Minister who was likely to add extensively to Britain's armaments as a "precautionary" measure against Napoleon.

But even if Cobden had entered the Palmerston Cabinet he must soon have withdrawn despite the Reform Bill to which the Prime Minister definitely committed himself for 1860 and his disarming nomination of Lord John Russell to the Foreign Office. The French military successes against Austria, the expected acquisition by Napoleon of Savoy and Nice, and the further openings for French ambition apparently presented by the revolutionary Italian¹ and the troubled European situation hurried the uncritical into wildly exaggerated notions both of Napoleon's power and guile. Cobden could never have stayed in a Cabinet which encouraged the Rifle Volunteer movement to grow to the unprecedented heights of the 1859 Recess² despite the new naval fortifications just voted and Napoleon's growing inability to profit from the Italian developments he had precipitated but could not control. Cobden, indeed, soon grew fearful enough of the rising anti-French spirit apparently sweeping the country to offer all the assistance in his power to Gladstone who, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was the Minister most interested in stopping armament extravagances. The two men had co-operated before in the effort to restrain the powerful gusts of "patriotic" passion aroused in 1850, 1855, and 1857. Now they successfully planned to negotiate an Anglo-French Commercial Treaty which should increase the flow of trade between the two countries and thus their mutual interest in and respect for one another. The result was the famous Cobden-Chevalier Treaty of 1860 which inaugurated almost a continent-wide epoch of Freer Trade and certainly did a great deal to abate Anglo-French tension during the ensuing decade.

A political position, however, which throws international affairs into high relief is not normally the best one for securing domestic reforms. So at least it proved in March 1860 when timid English,

¹ There had been a successful Franco-Sardinian invasion of Austrian Lombardo-Venetia, and this had been accompanied by revolutions in Parma, Modena, Tuscany, and the Papal Legations. Naples and Sicily, too, were so ripe for revolt against the very worst of the Italian Governments that tricky French plans of procuring their Crowns for a Bonaparte were suspected, not quite without cause.

² Cf. *Illustrated London News*, October 8th, October 22nd, October 29th.

Scottish, and Irish Reform Bills were introduced at a time when the Italian situation was growing ever more absorbing and ominous developments in the United States portended the outbreak of a great struggle on Slavery.¹ To confine Redistribution in England, for example, to twenty-five seats taken one each from small two-member boroughs, to find two extra seats for Scotland, but to give them to a Scottish Universities constituency and, finally, to maintain a complete ban on the Ballot, was certainly not the way to arouse working-class enthusiasm in such stirring times.

But if working-class opinion refused to excite itself about Bills so plainly designed to keep plebeian influence well below the level which Bright's agitation might win if given the right opportunity,² the Tories and even some Whigs grew most alarmed about the type of Ultra-Radical or Trade Union nominee expected from boroughs offered a £6 householder franchise. When on June 11th Lord John Russell withdrew the Bills after long stretches of tedious debating he was, in fact, accepting a House of Commons situation which threatened to result in a Government defeat on a characteristic "delaying" motion asking that Disfranchisement and Redistribution should not be undertaken until the results of the 1861 Census were to hand. The true index

¹ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, November 12th, 1859, for a grave leader on John Brown's "revolt," as well as news of the "Garibaldi Fund for providing muskets." The British public plainly had early notice of what might happen.

² The "moderate liberal" fear of Bright's unceasing agitation is well mirrored in the *National Review's* article of April 1860 entitled "Mr. Bright, painted by himself," and evoked by a volume of Bright's republished speeches. Some quotations are worth giving: "We accuse him of sedulously employing his great powers to sow distrust and excite animosity between the upper and lower classes of society. We accuse him of endeavouring to effect this object by habitual, wilful, and unscrupulous misrepresentations. And lastly, we accuse him of systematically inculcating on the audiences he addresses the most sordid, selfish, and dangerous views of national policy. He tells the poor that they are robbed by the rich. He tells the suffering and discontented artisan that his discontent is just, because his sufferings are caused by the aristocratic harpies who fatten on his industry. He tells the labourer who aspires to possess land that he is only hindered from doing so by the law of primogeniture and the absorbing propensities of lordly proprietors.

"He is careful never to tell these ignorant audiences, whose envy and covetous desires he thus strives to goad, that if they were saving, sober, and intelligent they might all become capitalists in half a generation, in spite of taxes, peers or the law of entail. Yet no one knows better than he that such is the indisputable fact. . . .

"Not content with charging the governing classes with the crime of habitually increasing the taxes in order that they may live upon them, Mr. Bright proceeds to accuse them of systematically employing the power which the constitution gives them to shift the pressure of taxation from their own shoulders to those of the unrepresented classes. . . ."

Distractions from Reform 1858-1864

of the Parliamentary prospects of "political progress" was plainly rather the discouraging Ballot Division of March 20th at 147 against 252 than the fallacious figures obtainable by counting everybody in the House of Commons who did not follow Disraeli as a "Liberal."

There was, of course, some sporadic Radical effort to arouse an outcry capable of saving the Reform Bills of 1860, but it had no wonderful success.¹ For one thing Radical energy in the political sphere had to be divided between the Reform outcry and one which it was necessary to raise almost simultaneously against the Lords for venturing to reject that reduction of the Paper Duties to which Gladstone had been brought as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Lords rejected the Paper Duties Bill in violation of constitutional usage because they did not desire to facilitate the production of still cheaper newspapers, newspapers that might become cheap enough to enter every working-class home and spread there the "dangerous" views of Radical journalists and politicians. But in interfering with a remission of taxation voted by the Commons the Lords exposed themselves to a particularly damaging "Peers versus People" outcry which Bright was very active in promoting. By giving way in 1861 rather than fight the battle again in aggravated circumstances² the Lords majority did no foolish thing. An occasional "great Liberal victory" of this negative kind, needing two Sessions of concentrated Radical effort in itself, was apt to calm the political atmosphere for two or three Sessions more. Some "reasonable Liberals,"

¹ The "moderate Radical" *Leeds Mercury*, for example, did its best for the Bills. But essentially its file for 1860 confirms the *Annual Register's* summary that "a certain number of public meetings had been held previously to the commencement of the Session, and some manifestation of interest had been made; but it was not sustained, and bore the appearance of being factitious rather than real." The *Annual Register's* account of general prosperity and the *Leeds Mercury's* bitter regrets (June 12th) that such relatively placid times were not being used to offer the working classes a "moderate" settlement of their suffrage grievance also have significance.

² In 1861, Gladstone, departing from precedent, put all his financial proposals including Repeal of the Paper Duties, into one Bill which, as a money Bill, the Lords could not amend, but only accept or reject. They finally shrank from a rejection which would have played into the hands of their Radical foes. But the triumph of "progress" was won by no large margin even in the Commons where the critical division was only one of 296-281. It was in this struggle that Gladstone's possible future as a "Radical leader" began to be suspected. But the *Greville Memoirs* (February 15, 1860) show that Gladstone's taste for popularity and his ability to work with Cobden and Bright were giving concern to at least one Cabinet colleague even earlier. It was feared that the Chancellor might yet go as far as Republicanism—and a graduated income-tax!

indeed, who knew how Palmerston's hand had had to be forced by Bright's "below the gangway" following in the Commons,¹ were inclined to be resentful that the great Radical orator showed no inclination to rest and be thankful.

Radical Parliamentarians, of course, knew that there was little to be thankful for when Lord John Russell virtually declined to present another Reform Bill and when Lord Derby announced in public the Conservative party's reasons for supporting Palmerston in office.² But some explanation should be given as to why in such circumstances the middle and lower classes could not be roused to combat save on the relatively minor matter of the Paper Duties. A survey of the national and international scenes, however, makes all clear. Throughout the year the Volunteer Movement was growing from strength to strength even among the "lower middle classes." And to find the Radical W. E. Forster drilling his Wharfedale mill-workers, the Christian Socialist Tom Hughes a captain in a London Working Class Corps of nearly a thousand, and the Temperance men, too, forming their own Volunteer units is to understand how far down in the social scale there existed suspicion of the French Emperor and his armaments.³ The Italian situation also absorbed an enormous amount of working-class interest, and Garibaldi's exploits first in Sicily and then in Naples provoked the greatest enthusiasm.⁴ Indeed, working-class Temperance effort soon found it profitable to send out its propagandists as "Garibaldi Life Boat Crews" clad in something like Garibaldi costume.

The Trade Union situation, too, contributed its part to distract working-class effort from organising any decisive support for the Parliamentary Radicals.⁵ In the Trade Union world the

¹ G. M. Trevelyan's *Life of John Bright*, p. 291.

² May 1, 1861, in Irving's *Annals of Our Time*.

³ *Revue des deux Mondes*, December 1, 1860, pp. 544-5, for a French observer who had been particularly struck by workmen's willingness to make heavy sacrifices to find £2 10s. for their uniforms.

⁴ The first large Garibaldi demonstration at St. Martin's Hall took place on May 22, 1860.

⁵ Though Bright himself with the true politician's instinct was already doing his utmost to secure the support of Trades sentiment. Here is an extract from a Reform speech at Manchester on April 12, 1860. It refers to the Building Trades dispute. "If I were a working man," said Bright in regard to Tory attacks on the building operatives and the "agitators" who led them, "I should never say I would surrender my right, in combination with others, to take such steps as are legal and moral for the advancement of my interests and the interests of those who worked with me. But if these strikes are sometimes—it may be often, it may be mostly—bad, and that, I think, all classes of persons would agree to,

Distractions from Reform 1858-1864

years between 1859 and 1862 witnessed, for instance, the prolonged struggle of the London Building Trades for the Nine Hours Day. The details of this obstinate and partly successful effort must be sought elsewhere,¹ but here may be noted not only that the final settlement allowed the "Saturday half-holiday," but that in the course of the contest the London Trades Council was set up. Such things formed, of course, important examples for the rest of the country,² and there were other notable events proceeding at the same time, such as the struggle of other cotton areas to obtain the "Blackburn List of Rates" and the Tyneside Chainmakers' effort of 1859-60 to assist the raising of wages in the depressed but competing chainmaking industry of the Midlands. Again, vastly impressed by the power, resources, and scales of benefit of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, other Trades were beginning the difficult work of forming Amalgamated Societies capable of absorbing the scattered public-house trade clubs of their respective crafts. It was on June 4, 1860, for example, that the effort to amalgamate the Carpenters' and Joiners' Clubs began, and similar plans were soon current among Tailors, Bricklayers, Boot and Shoe Makers, and the rest.³ It is plain enough from all these instances what an important diversion of Ultra-Radical energy from political into Trades channels must have been proceeding.

In 1861 America began to provide another set of distractions from Reform. Conservatives were very quick to seize on the devastating Civil War then opened as proof of what the Transatlantic Democracy, once so applauded by the Radicals, eventually

still the House of Commons and Mr. Whiteside and his party are not the parties to upbraid the working men with what they do upon this matter. The House of Commons itself was a great trades union from 1815 to 1846 (cheers). You know that the Shibboleth of the country members was wheat at so much; barley at so much; oats at so much. . . . Now we combined against this system. We 'struck' (loud applause)." From *Annals of our Time*.

¹ E.g., *Legislation, Labour Leaders and Labour Labour Movements*, by G. Howell, i, 128-35 (ed. 1905).

² The *Illustrated London News*, for example, had its first news of the Building Trades dispute on July 30th. There followed week after week and month after month information of how the Master Builders' Association was being fought by an alliance of the operatives of the various Building Trades (secretary, George Potter) supported by subscriptions from Engineers, Compositors, the Bristol Trades, the Liverpool Trades, etc. The *Illustrated London News* was, of course, opposed to the strike, but clearly impressed by the weekly "pay out" to the strikers.

³ The ability of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers to vote one £1,000 after another in aid of the striking builders seems to have made a very strong impression.

entailed.¹ Indeed, it was with difficulty that they were restrained from forcing a quarrel with the North which should break up the Union without hope of repair, and with the Union the prestige of American republican democracy with the British masses. From the beginning of 1862, moreover, when the Northern blockade of Southern ports rendered it necessary to organise Relief on an unprecedented scale in the cotton areas laid idle by lack of their raw material,² it was being argued that so long as charitable subscriptions from the rich were necessary to enable Lancashire's distress to be met, the disturbing subject of Reform should be laid aside.³ For years after 1861, in fact, the losing divisions of 229-248 on Locke King's motion for a £10 householder franchise in the counties and of 193-245 on Baines's motion for a £6 householder franchise in the boroughs were destined to represent Parliamentary Radicalism's disappointing high-water marks.⁴

Some further explanation of this apparently surprising Radical failure to make any progress might do something to clarify the political situation of the years 1861-4. It will, for example, make much else clear to know that Cobden and Bright were devoting themselves above all else to the sometimes difficult task of keeping pro-Northern and Anti-Slavery sentiment strong enough to deter both Front Benches from alluring schemes of intervention which might have saved the South.⁵ Ultra-Radicals, again, were plunging

¹ Cf. *The Beehive*, the new working-class organ for October 25, 1862.

² *The National Review* for January 1863 contains an excellent article on "Lancashire in 1862." It permits all the issues to be understood, Lord Derby's Chairmanship of the Manchester Relief Executive, for instance, and the alliance of "proprietors, merchants, and manufacturers" to raise and distribute Relief, indeed, but also to combat Ultra-Radical charges that poor rates were still kept too low, the labour test for Poor Relief too degrading, and that the whole trouble had come from the overproduction of greedy manufacturers and their exclusive preference for American slave-grown cotton.

³ Cf. the angry *Beehive*, October 4th, 1862: "The circumstances of Lancashire and other manufacturing counties are adduced as a reason for saying nothing at present calculated to disturb good feeling and distract men's minds from the labours of humanity and love in which everybody is engaged. . . . The distress in Lancashire is the reason most urgent at present for escaping from exclusively mercantile and middle-class legislation into a healthy representation of all classes. Even the distress of the present season might have been greatly modified by active measures taken in time. . . ."

⁴ Cf. *Hansard*, March 13th, for the Locke King's motion and April 10th for that of Baines.

⁵ Working-class sentiment was far from immune from the rampant anti-Northernism of "public opinion" led by *The Times* (cf., for example, the *Beehive* for November 8, 1862). Bright's speech of March 26, 1863, to a great meeting organised by the London Trade Unions must take high rank in the story of this effort. Nor should Potter's Union and Emancipation Society be forgotten.

Distractions from Reform 1858-1864

from Garibaldi excitements in 1862 to fervid anti-Russianism in 1863. Indeed, the feeling evoked by the cruel Russian suppression of the Polish rising of 1863 was such that the Chartist and Trades groups of the Metropolis would with parallel French artisan groups have been the hottest partisans of the joint Anglo-French insistence on the 1815 Treaty conditions which seemed a probability at one stage in 1863.¹ Then in April 1864 the actual presence of Garibaldi in England gave the Ultra-Radicals and Chartists a better opportunity of successful Garibaldi demonstrations than they had had in 1862 when, though roused by the General's renewed revolutionary proceedings in Italy and especially against Papal rule, they had had organised opposition from Irish Catholic labourers to overcome.² In fact, in 1864 Garibaldi fervour rapidly rose to such heights that it was found convenient that the Italian revolutionary should leave the country after a stay of less than three weeks. Explosions in Rome against the Pope and his French garrison, in Venice against the Austrians, and even in the "Kingdom of Italy" against a tame constitutionalism of the Savoy pattern were all made more likely by reports of what was happening in England.

To the "Manchester Radicals" the enormous working-class excitement about Garibaldi suggested some rueful reflections. "When will the masses of this country begin to think of home politics?" wrote Cobden to a supporter. "Our friend Bright observed, as he gazed from a window in Parliament Street on the tens of thousands that cheered the Italian, 'If the people would only make a few such demonstrations for themselves, we could do something for them.' But nothing except foreign politics seems to occupy the attention of the people, press, or parliament."³

Yet if in April 1864 the Radicals could see no immediate prospect of a "forward move" in domestic politics, they knew very well that there were some redeeming features in the situation. When even tap-room politicians become absorbed in foreign affairs, the sure presumption is that the economic position at home is causing no excessive heart-burning. And, indeed, the industrial and financial position of the country was such that the very Cotton

¹ Cf. *Punch* of February 1863 for a cartoon on the working-class deputation to Palmerston asking for war against Russia. Paris workmen also acted.

² Cf. the indignant *Beehive* of November 1, 1862, and previous weeks for charges as to Catholic "hooliganism" had been organised.

³ Morley's *Cobden*, p. 911.

Famine itself could do no more than temporarily arrest the astonishing growth of British trade¹ so that by 1863 another "very good year for British manufacturers and an excellent one for merchants, financiers, and company promoters" was being reported.² There could apparently have been no greater justification for the extensive "Free Trade" changes which Gladstone had undertaken in 1853 and 1860 after a long course of Radical advocacy had prepared the way.³ The fact that working-class well-being was increasing at least as fast as commercial prosperity completed the Free Trade triumph.⁴

"Retrenchment" was another Radical cause which seemed to have been sensibly advanced by 1864. From 1859 to 1862 there had been a considerable danger that an arms race between England and France would begin and that the attendant heavy expenditure and dangerous international friction would check the normal expansion of British enterprise. But thanks primarily to Cobden outside the Cabinet⁵ and Gladstone within,⁶ the danger had been overcome and expenditure for the year ending March 31, 1865, was being reduced as low as 66 millions, though it had been 72 millions for the year ending March 31, 1861.⁷ Cobden's satisfaction was the greater from the fact that the second quarter of

¹ Cf. J. H. Clapham, *Economic History of Modern Britain*, ii, 373: "Mainly because of the check to Anglo-American intercourse, the years 1861-2 yielded the only horizontal section of the mounting curve of the aggregate import and export trades of the United Kingdom between 1850 and 1884."

² *Ibid.* This opinion is based on the *Economist's* Review of the year. It is noticeable that the trade curve resumes its "steep upward course" in 1863.

³ Though the Radicals of the House of Commons were the most resolute Free Traders there, it would be wrong to omit the long years of propaganda by the Financial Reform Association of Liverpool, which claimed to be non-party. This Association, recruiting important mercantile and shipping interests in the greater ports, was in favour of carrying Free Trade farther than it was ever carried, even in England. Holding that the machinery for collecting what customs duties remained after 1860 increased mercantile costs by more than the sum collected, they advocated the complete demolition of customs barriers, the resulting revenue deficiency to be met by "economy," reduction of armament expenditure and the graduation of the income-tax. Their first step towards the Free Trade millennium—the "free breakfast table" with its suggested abolition of the tea and sugar duties—enjoyed extensive Radical support for decades after 1860, and, indeed, survived as a party-cry into the twentieth century.

⁴ Good harvests and cheap bread were accentuating the "greater comfort of the working classes."

⁵ Cobden's campaign against panic armament expenditure was not confined to the House of Commons or the platform. His pamphlet on *The Three Panics* (1862) (152 pp.) had an important influence.

⁶ Cf. F. W. Hirst, *Gladstone as Financier and Economist*, pp. 246-9. Some credit should also go to Milner Gibson, the Cobdenite representative in the Cabinet.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

Distractions from Reform 1858-1864

1864 had nearly seen England dragged into the kind of "unnecessary Continental war" which he always feared while Palmerston was Prime Minister. But Palmerston had been held in check by the great body of "non-interventionist" opinion which Cobden himself had trained, and Britain was kept out of a Schleswig-Holstein war on behalf of Denmark and against the German Confederation.¹ Accordingly the considerable tax-reductions of the 1863 and 1864 Budgets could not only be maintained² but preparations could begin to add to them during 1865 and 1866. The triumphant reduction of the tea-duty from 1s. to 6d. per lb. and that of the income-tax from 6d. in the pound to 4d. might not be announced until Budget Day, 1865, nor the total abolition of the timber duties until the Budget Day of 1866.³ But they were already in prospect as soon as the project for intervention in Schleswig-Holstein had been defeated.

Finally, the omens even with regard to Parliamentary Reform were plainly to improve during the course of 1864. The Schleswig-Holstein crisis had weakened Palmerston's position considerably, and it hardly seemed possible for the eighty-year-old Premier to delay his retirement much longer.⁴ And with Palmerston's departure the strange phenomenon of a "Liberal majority" unable to carry Reform appeared certain to pass away. What gave the political prophets, who urged this, the greater certitude was the fact that Gladstone, Palmerston's inevitable successor as Leader of the Commons, had twice committed himself in a "democratic" sense during the course of the year.⁵ Russell, no doubt, would

¹ Cobden's *Speeches*, ii, 344: "And then came up from the country such a manifestation of opinion against war, that day after day during that eventful week Member after Member from the largest constituencies went to those who acted for the Government in Parliament, and told them distinctly that they would not allow war on any such matters as Schleswig and Holstein. . . ."

² By the Budget of 1863 the tea-duty was reduced from 1s. 5d. to 1s. per lb., and the income-tax from 9d. to 7d.; and by that of 1864 the sugar-duties were halved and the income-tax further reduced to 6d.

³ Cf. *Hansard*, May 3, 1866, for other Budget proposals like the abolition of the pepper-duty.

⁴ *Hansard*, June 27th, shows Palmerston making a very ill-judged retreat on Schleswig-Holstein. Its closing bluster against Prussia and Austria evoked "loud shouts of derision" from the Tory Opposition. When a Tory Vote of Censure came to be moved on July 4th, the Government was only saved by the votes of some who, like Cobden, were in reality more critical than the Opposition.

⁵ On May 11, 1864, Gladstone had produced a sensation by meeting Baines's annual Bill for lowering the Borough Franchise in a very different spirit from that shown on April 13th by Palmerston towards Locke King's annual Bill for lowering the County Franchise. On October 13th, at Manchester, Gladstone had again admitted the need for reforming the representation of the people.

be superimposed on Gladstone as Prime Minister; but that, so far from weakening the prospects of Reform, would improve them. Russell was known to retain an obstinate affection for his abortive Reform Bills of 1854 and 1860, and would doubtless urge them on his Leader of the Commons at the first opportunity. All that was necessary was the revival of outside agitation, and this, as the next chapter will show, was already being planned in several different quarters.

A View of England in 1863

“The impulse to advance in Great Britain has almost always come from below, but for some years past the masses have been singularly unwilling to move. . . . They have given up the Charter, given up voting to a most annoying extent, and turned with fresh interest and avidity to schemes for social improvement. . . . The middle class sympathise with the lower in their crave for physical comfort. They will not concede them power—are, indeed, on that point recklessly selfish and blind,—but they will go to almost any length to improve their material condition. Every kind of benevolent project finds, and for thirty years has always found, the heartiest sympathy and support. Law after law has been passed to make the popular insurance system, the great but half-tried idea of benefit societies, more and more efficient. The vote for the education of the poor has become a visible item in the estimates. A tax which presses upon the poor is, when once that fact is recognised, a tax doomed. The State has broken its ordinary rules to establish a vast system of banks for the poor. . . . The masses, if not contented, have at least arrived at the conviction that they are not wilfully injured. . . .

“The press . . . have taught the people to watch foreign affairs with a minuteness which would have appeared to their grandfathers a puerile waste of time. . . . No appetite grows like the thirst for political excitement; and the man who has watched a revolution in France, when France is quiet again, looks out with a novel sense of enjoyment for a coming revolution in Servia. . . . The ancient indifference of the middle class has given way to a deep emotion, so deep that as each country successively rises to secure its freedom, it is a doubtful question whether England will or will not interfere. This novel attitude of the British mind has been indefinitely strengthened by the course of events in Italy. . . .”

The National Review, April 1863

THE REFORM LEAGUE AND THE REFORM UNION

"April 26, 1866.—On this the seventh evening of the debate on the Reform Bill, Mr. Lowe spoke with extraordinary vigour for two hours and a half against the measure, endeavouring to show the false principles upon which it was founded, the avowed coercion which was being brought to bear on the House of Commons, the extensive and powerful tyranny which would be exercised through the bill by trade unions, and the fatal injuries which democracy would inflict on the English Constitution. Amid the triumphant cheers of a large portion of the House, he devoted considerable time to proving that the principle of Mr. Gladstone's measure, and the idea that, however covertly, lay at the root of all his reasoning, was the fitness of the poorer classes for the franchise, . . . Mr. Lowe said he thought they had more reason every day they lived to regret the loss of Lord Palmerston."

From IRVING'S "Annals of Our Time."

"I was invited, with several other Radical members, to a conference with the leading members of the Council of the Reform League; and the task fell chiefly upon myself, of persuading them to give up the Hyde Park project and hold their meeting elsewhere. It was not Mr. Beales and Colonel Dickson who needed persuading. . . . It was the working men who held out, and so bent were they on their original scheme, that I was obliged to have recourse to *les grand moyens*. I told them that a proceeding, which would certainly produce a collision with the military, could only be justifiable on two conditions: if the position of affairs had become such that a revolution was desirable, and if they thought themselves able to accomplish one. To this argument, after considerable discussion, they at last yielded: and I was able to inform Mr. Walpole (the Tory Home Secretary) that their intention was given up. I shall never forget the depth of his relief. . . ."

J. S. MILL'S "Autobiography," on the political situation in London at the end of July 1866.

To trace the building-up of the forces which combined to restore "movement" to British politics in 1865 is no easy work. The "ghost of the League," however, was known to inhabit Newall's Buildings, Manchester, long after 1852.¹ And the Anti-Corn Law League's Chairman, George Wilson, did after many false starts and with the help of the Bazleys, the Potters, the Brights, and the Turners of Lancashire and the parallel worthies in all the great manufacturing centres launch a National Reform Union which already in the spring of 1865 showed signs of attaining political importance.²

But only a complete list of the 650 delegates from more than 170 different towns and associations who attended the National Reform Union's great pre-election Conference of May 1865, and a further careful biographical examination of its leading personalities, would fully reveal why the "Reform movement" had been unable "to get up steam" for so long. It would become plain, for example, how many of the old League elements had strayed after "false gods," and through what a course of Crimeanism, Anti-Yehism, and Napoleon-panic some of them had been before returning to a Cobdenite fold³ made the more inviting by the intolerable flatness to which the tacit Palmerston-Derby *entente* had reduced domestic politics. It would become clear, again, what a wide coalition it was that was being rallied at Manchester on May 15th and 16, 1865. Alderman Heywood of Manchester, for instance, represented the pre-Chartist Hetherington following of 1830-5, Councillor Moir of Glasgow the 1839 Chartist Convention, and Ernest Jones Chartism's later aspects. Then George Dawson, the famous lecturer and preacher, spoke for the new "advanced Liberalism" of Birmingham, George Howell, and J. R. Cremer for the new working-class Reform League of London, and P. A. Taylor, W. E. Forster, and Wilfrid Lawson⁴ for a new generation of "advanced Liberal" M.P.s with scant respect for Russell and none at all for Palmerston. Nor should mention be withheld of the Leeds operative group whose Leeds Working

¹ It appears that the League Rooms were long kept available for another "movement" when the propitious time should seem to have come.

² Cf. *Report of the Proceedings at the National Reform Conference held in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, May 15 and 16, 1865* (114 pp.).

³ Cobden had died on April 2, 1865, but his death only served to increase his prestige.

⁴ The *Dictionary of National Biography*.

The Reform League and the Reform Union

Men's Parliamentary Reform Association had in November 1861 called the Conference of Lancashire and Yorkshire Reformers that had made possible first the National Reform Conference gathered in the capital in May 1862 and then the Manchester Reform Conference of May 1864. These were counted as the lineal predecessors of their own Conference by the hopeful participants in the Manchester proceedings of May 1865.¹

The Leeds organisation, of course, represents only a fraction of the persistent working-class Suffrage sentiment which was the general political background all over operative England even when the House of Commons aspect was most unfavourable. The Northern Reform Union, for instance, centred on Tyneside and animated by the remarkable and wealthy Joseph Cowen,² agitated the North-East from Middlesbrough to Hexham effectively enough between 1858 and 1862 to awaken considerable echoes in other parts of the country. A Bristol Reform Union, again, founded in 1861 and with a moneyed "advanced Liberal" patron in Handel Cossham, was, like the Northern Reform Union, vigorous enough to attempt the issue of its own tracts and long-lived enough to survive to the more stirring days of 1865.

But it is to the Metropolis that it is necessary to turn in order to find the principal sources of that working-class National Reform League which was able during the course of 1865³ and 1866 to develop into a more formidable agency of agitation than the better-financed National Reform Union, supported by Bright's following of manufacturers.⁴ There was, of course, a continuous Chartist tradition in all the working-class quarters of London, and J. B. Leno, the printer-poet, and Charles Bradlaugh, the solicitor's clerk who gave his spare time to Atheist lecturing and the editing of the *National Reformer*, must serve to represent some of the

¹ Cf. *Report of the Proceedings at the National Reform Conference, etc., 1865.*

² Cf. *Life and Speeches of Joseph Cowen, M.P.* (E. R. Jones), pp. 23-7, and the *Reasoner* of October 17, 1858, on "Mr. Cowen's Political Visit to London."

³ The first *Address of the Executive Committee* dated May 2nd was to "the Working Men of Great Britain and Ireland." Another *Address to the Trade Unionists of the United Kingdom* came in June 1865.

⁴ At one stage in the winter of 1865-6 the Union announced the receipt of subscriptions totalling £1,986 10s., mostly from manufacturers. At that time 76 Branch Associations had been formed. By July 1866 the Union was giving the number of its branches as 130 and the number of membership cards issued as 20,000 (Howell Collection, *Reform*, vol. 6, 53a and 53f). The Reform League's papers show that by May 1866 it claimed 51 provincial and 20 metropolitan branches, and that its income from April 1865 to May 1866 had been £621 13s. 7½d., a good deal of this, of course, coming in relatively large donations from "advanced Liberals" whose help had been sought.

types which it took to the Council of the National Reform League. Another type was such a shop assistant as the young Howard Evans who after leading a Shoreditch contingent of a thousand to the famous "working-class reception" of Garibaldi in April 1864 was here putting his hand to a political career which took him on to Radical editorships in the Fleet Street of the 1890's and 1900's.¹

It was to Trade Union sentiment, however, that George Howell, the bricklayer-Secretary of the League, saw that the most effective appeal might lie,² and he, of course, knew better than Edmond Beales, the barrister-President, or Lt.-Col. Dickson, Captain Dresser Rogers, and J. B. Langley, the other prominent non-operative figures in a movement already offering prospects of political importance, how thoroughly the Trades' ground had been prepared. The *Beehive*, for example, the successful Trades newspaper born in 1861 and largely written by Robert Hartwell of the Chartist Convention of 1839, had long been advocating political action by the Trades. The following extract may serve to show its temper:

I deny that by a Trade Union making use of its organisation, simply to obtain the suffrage for its members, it would be in any danger of destruction. . . . I have no desire to see Trade Unions turned into debating societies for the discussion of the many political questions of the day, upon which great diversity of opinion must necessarily exist: this I admit would be fatal to their existence. But they are not asked to do this: they are only asked to take up the Suffrage, about which, amongst working men, there cannot be any difference of opinion. . . . If only a few intelligent and determined men in each Union would bring this subject fairly before the members at a proper time, I feel convinced that in the great majority of cases they would carry the Union with them in spite of the timidity of some members and the antiquated prejudices of others. . . .³

Such action as was here advocated did actually take place during 1866 in the Birmingham area where many Lodges of a large variety of Trade Unions joined the Midland Branch of the National Reform League in their corporate capacity. But long before this,

¹ Howard Evans, *Radical Fights of Forty Years*. From Evans's account it would appear that the National Reform League was launched in the spring of 1865 by those who, having co-operated in the Garibaldi working-class demonstration of April 1864, had kept in touch afterwards.

² Howell early issued a special appeal to Trade Unions.

³ *Beehive*, December 6, 1862. The Bristol Reform Union made the article the subject of a special leaflet to the Trades.

The Reform League and the Reform Union

great numbers of the individual Trade Unionists of the Metropolis had had to make the fortunes of the League by taking out their separate membership cards, paying over their shillings, and trusting the Executive to call them out for demonstrations at the proper moment. The working men of London had had what might be called their "class temper" sharpened to a notable degree by the long Building Trades struggle of 1859-62, the London Trades Council, manned almost entirely by advocates of a Suffrage agitation, had acquired increasing moral authority, and in the winter of 1864-5 even such a body as the International Working Men's Association seemed to be making considerable headway. Dr. Karl Marx might have his own views as to the world-wide revolutionary ends which such an Association might come to serve. But working-class leaders like Howell and Cremer of the Reform League regarded it first and foremost as a means of checkmating those employers who might attempt to break strikes by using the new transport facilities to import French, Belgian, German, or Italian labour rapidly and cheaply. The Labour leadership of 1865, in short, was at once strenuous, practical, and far-sighted, and the Reform League agitation was immeasurably helped thereby.¹

Howell's paid Secretaryship, too, was of especial importance during the Reform League's critical opening period after April 1865, and those enthusiasts who taxed themselves to meet Howell's salary until League funds proved sufficient never did anything wiser. Howell proved an adept at securing Press attention for the doings of the League, and the newspaper notices concerning the weekly meetings of its Executive Committee must undoubtedly have conveyed a grander impression than the actual scene often warranted. But even to the initiated, branches seemed opening promisingly enough both in London and in the provinces to warrant consideration being given as early as August to the idea of summoning a Conference which should open its meetings at the same time that Parliament began its Session of 1866.² The Conference was to be closed by a great public demonstration and the procession of the whole of the delegates as a deputation

¹ Henry Broadhurst's *Story of My Life* is one of the several biographies available for throwing light on the "Trades" temper of the time. Chapters 5 and 6 of the Webbs's famous *History of Trade Unionism* are, of course, indispensable as is an inspection of the *Beehive* file.

² Information derived from the League's papers in the Howell Collection of the Bishopsgate Institute.

to the Prime Minister. It is plain that the prospects of the agitation were improving and they improved still further as several handsome subscriptions came in from rich Radicals whose interest was enlisted. When the League's first statement of income came to be made, indeed, it was revealed that £476 out of a total of £621 had come from donations of this type.¹

Meanwhile, there had occurred the General Election of July 1865 and the marked strengthening of "advanced Liberalism" in the Commons indicated by such notable returns as those of Professor Fawcett for Brighton, Tom Hughes for Lambeth, and J. S. Mill for Westminster. Moreover by rejecting Gladstone, who had long been making great advances in Liberalism, Oxford University had finally released from his old Tory fetters an obvious Prime-Minister-to-be in a fashion which caused rejoicing in the Reform League and the despatch of a congratulatory telegram.

What attitude the aged Palmerston would have attempted to take up towards the growing pressure for Reform is uncertain. But his death in October 1865 made Russell Prime Minister and Gladstone Leader of the Commons, and the two brought the Cabinet to sanction their plan for undertaking Parliamentary Reform during the 1866 Session. On March 12, 1866, therefore, Gladstone, amid great Parliamentary excitement, introduced a Government Reform Bill to reduce the borough voting qualification to £7 per annum occupation and the county voting qualification to £14 per annum occupation. There were, of course, other important provisions relating to Suffrage Extension for the benefit of "compound householders," "lodgers," and the like. But on the main £7 borough and £14 county heads of Suffrage Extension the Bill represented a marked retreat from Russell's own £6 and £10 proposals of 1854 and 1860, a retreat necessary to enable Russell to carry the High Whigs of his Cabinet and Government with him. But despite this retreat the Parliamentary situation soon grew difficult enough² to induce men like Bright

¹ Information derived from the League's papers in the Howell Collection of the Bishopsgate Institute. P. A. Taylor, M.P. (of the firm of Courtauld's), Samuel Morley (of I. and R. Morley), and Sir Wilfrid Lawson were among those who were approached and gave donations.

² The Lansdowne "interest" represented by Lowe, M.P. for the Lansdowne borough of Calne, and the Westminster "interest" represented by Earl Grosvenor, the Westminster heir, were early recruiting the "independent Liberal" objectors into what was later immortalised as the "Cave of Adullam." They were soon acting in virtual conjunction with the Tories behind such a

The Reform League and the Reform Union

and Mill to throw all their weight in support of the Bill instead of complaining of its insufficiency. As the Parliamentary position of Reform, too, grew more serious the agitating prospects of the National Reform Union and still more of the National Reform League were mightily to improve.¹

A word of explanation must be given to account for the strenuousness of the opposition to the Bill and the nature of the ground that was taken. First, it should be remembered that the 1865 elections had probably cost more money than had ever been expended on a General Election before, and that there were scores of professing Liberals who desired more than anything else a four or five years' undisturbed tenure in return for the heavy disbursements they had made. The Reform Bill, however, threatened a Dissolution in 1866 as the result of a conflict with the Lords or in 1867 as the result of the need to give the new voters and the new constituencies their representation. Accordingly there were "Liberals" who even if they did not go into open revolt were not altogether sorry that a "moderate Liberal" Cave of Adullam should be developing with some 30 to 40 votes to throw on the side of Tory obstruction. The Cave of Adullam freelances, moreover, through the mouth of Lowe, Lord Lansdowne's member for Calne, ventured to come into the open with the kind of attack upon Democracy for which Carlyle had long prepared the way. But though Lowe's speeches were frenziedly cheered in the Commons, their effects outside were hardly what

dangerous delaying motion as that of Earl Grosvenor's demanding to know the extent of Redistribution before voting on Suffrage Extension. Though to supply the details of Redistribution was tactically to weaken the Government—because some at least of the "Liberal" members for boroughs whose suppression or semi-suppression was proposed were certain to join the "Cave"—the Government found it necessary to promise the information at the Second Reading.

¹ In April matters were already promising enough to cause the Reform League to approach the Reform Union with suggestions for combined operations. The middle-class Reform Union was, however, still coy. Their secretary's answer of April 10th ran as follows: "I confess I have been struck with the extent of your operations. . . . As I wrote you before, it appeared to us that it was desirable at the present moment that the two bodies should act pretty much as they have hitherto been doing . . . if the Bill were in danger some other course might be preferable but until we see the result of the discussions we are scarcely in a condition to say what that course should be." Bright, however, was already convinced enough of the Bill's danger to have called for mass demonstrations in a letter read to a Birmingham meeting on March 26th. "Parliament is never hearty for Reform or for any good measure," he wrote. "It hated the Reform Bill of 1831 and 1832. It does not like the Franchise Bill now upon its table. It is to a large extent the offspring of landed power in the counties and corruption in the boroughs, and it would be strange if such a Parliament were in favour of freedom and of an honest representation."

he would have wished. Even politically apathetic working men were roused to bitter resentment when they were told how they had been described as "impulsive, unreflecting violent people," guilty of "venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and intimidation," and Lowe's attacks on the Trade Unions only made matters worse.¹ That Gladstone should by contrast be speaking of the working classes with warm sympathy awoke in them not only the desire to save the Government, but a deep personal gratitude of the utmost importance to the future of national politics.

It should now be plain, perhaps, why the defeat and fall of the Russell-Gladstone Government in June and the succession of Tory Ministers who had been co-operating in the attack on Suffrage Extension, should have exasperated working-class sentiment to the point which gave the National Reform League the chance of opening a major agitation. Until this time the League's efforts had probably been of less effect than those of the Reform Union whose better finances had allowed it to throw off branches more methodically, especially after some stimulating oratory from Bright and Gladstone during the Easter adjournment of Parliament. But now in adopting the policy of calling large open-air meetings and processions to the West End, the League hit upon a plan which took it very quickly to first-class national importance. Deep and genuine working-class anger had been called out by the Lowe "slanders" and the enthusiastic reception which had been given them in the House of Commons. How deep this anger was, "public opinion" of the Clubland order was given its first chance of learning when on June 29th, while a Derby-Disraeli Ministry was still seeking to reinforce itself from the "Liberals" of the Cave of Adullam, a huge League meeting took place in Trafalgar Square whose size and violence surprised everybody. Russell was censured for not having dissolved the Parliament which had defeated his Reform Bill; support was refused in advance to any future Reform Bill not based on the League's programme;² and a procession was formed which after demonstrating enthusiastically outside Gladstone's house traversed Pall

¹ *Hansard*, March 13th, for Lowe's speech on the First Reading; *Hansard*, April 26th, for his speech on the Second Reading.

² The League programme was "Registered and Resident Manhood Suffrage" and the Ballot. In asking for "Registered and Resident Manhood Suffrage" the League wished to show itself conciliatory without surrendering its determination to abolish all renting and rating conditions and valuations as prerequisites for the exercise of the vote.

The Reform League and the Reform Union

Mall, giving its clubmen very plain intimations of a strong hostility to the new Tory Ministry.¹

There was another Trafalgar Square meeting on July 2nd, and for July 23rd the League planned a mighty evening demonstration in Hyde Park. It was to begin at six and would be joined as the evening advanced by new working-class throngs, unable to leave their work early enough to take part in the elaborate street-processions to Hyde Park which had been arranged by the different branches of the League. The new Tory Home Secretary was now sufficiently alarmed to cause the issue of a Police Notice which announced with dubious legality that the proposed meeting in Hyde Park would not be allowed. Nothing could have done more to increase the numbers and determination of the would-be processionists and Bright, though declining an invitation to address them, publicly censured the official resolution to prevent them from meeting in Hyde Park. The result is well known. Between one and two hundred thousand people watched the Reform League leaders denied entry to the Park by the mobilised police, and shortly after their protest and the departure of some part of their procession towards Trafalgar Square the Park Lane railings gave way to the pressure of enormous crowds. Hours of skirmishing between police and the invading populace then began and troops of Guards were summoned though fortunately not used.

With the humbled Home Secretary's subsequent conference with the League's leaders began a period in whose agitations they were able to play a very important part. Acclaimed all over the country,² their presence at the great Birmingham Reform demonstrations of August 28th, for example, allowed a Midland Department of the Reform League to be projected which prospered exceedingly³ to judge from the imposing list of branches formed

¹ One of the resolutions adopted at Trafalgar Square had been: "That this meeting views with alarm the advent of the Tories to power, as being destructive to freedom at home and favourable to despotism abroad." The thunderous condition of the politics of the Continent where war had broken out between Austria and most states of the German Confederation on the one side and Prussia and Italy on the other contributed to the excited atmosphere at home.

² *Howell's Diary* for October, for example, shows Beales, the Reform League's President, to have been speaking as far afield as Sunderland, Bishop Auckland, and Carlisle, and doubtless stimulating or founding Reform League Branches wherever he went.

³ Its pamphlet of the summer of 1867 (Howell Collection) shows an income of £517 gathered between October 1866 and July 1, 1867, a Birmingham membership of 9,074, and a total membership of over 20,000.

in the ensuing months and the great mass-meetings these organised at two critical stages of the Reform campaign of 1867. By accepting the Reform League's programme of Manhood Suffrage and the Ballot Bright had created special enthusiasm at the Birmingham demonstrations. And during the long months of a Parliamentary Recess stretching to February 5, 1867, Reform League strategy was to be based largely on repeating at the other great manufacturing centres what had been done so successfully in London and Birmingham. A Reform League Department would be founded to co-ordinate the activities of the branches of the area, and before long the details of a great local demonstration were ready. Where possible this local demonstration was arranged in conjunction with the leaders of the local branch of the more middle-class Reform Union. The Reform League was rightly anxious to win the countenance of the "respectable" even for its open-air mass gatherings and, besides, Bright was much more likely to accept an invitation to address the great indoor meeting which normally followed on the open-air proceedings if he had the assurance of local worthies that everything was being constitutionally conducted. It was after some such manner that Bright came to head a distinguished Manchester platform on September 24th, spoke at the great West Riding demonstration in Leeds on October 8th, excited Scottish enthusiasm at Glasgow on October 16th, and on November 2nd addressed the working men of Dublin on Suffrage Extension, Redistribution, and the Ballot, and the importance of all three for securing a just settlement of Irish Church and Land grievances.¹ On November 20th Bright was back in Manchester addressing with other Parliamentarians an important and representative assembly convened by the National Reform Union. Meanwhile, Joseph Cowen had revived the Northern Reform Union and was preparing for great Newcastle demonstrations in January to precede the Parliamentary Session of 1867. Scottish and Irish Reform Leagues were also being constructed.

But it was the Reform League's London Executive with its command of the metropolitan situation which was, of course, in the best position to make pre-Sessional demonstrations, and it was now being supported in its design for a great Trade Union rally by the whole working-class world. The Government refused

¹ Most biographies of Bright give some account of the oratory of the 1866 Recess (cf. G. B. Smith, *Life and Speeches of John Bright*, ii, 137-41).

The Reform League and the Reform Union

the use of Hyde Park and, though there were those in the League who would have been prepared to defy its troops and police, the League leaders determined not to lose the alliance of the National Reform Union and the Parliamentary Radicals by rash action. The meeting-place of the various Trades processions that were to traverse London on December 3rd had, therefore, to be arranged in the distant grounds of Beaufort House, Chiswick, which were put at the League's disposal by a sympathetic Peer. The ordered trudge of many thousands of Unionists under the banners of their Trades from the parade-ground at Whitehall to Chiswick was made in the most dispiriting downpour, but the fine discipline maintained on the march, at Beaufort House and on the way back,¹ by weary, rain-sodden men gave their leaders and sympathisers another claim to public attention.² Next day *The Times* owned that the working men had done enough to show that they were in earnest in their demand for enfranchisement and asked them to desist from their disturbing demonstrations and wait for the action Parliament was now certain to take. Bright, however, addressing a great Trades meeting that night urged that it was only by continuing the expansion of the National Reform League, the National Reform Union, and similar organisations that working men would prevent a repetition in 1867 of what had happened in 1866.³

The League leaders, indeed, determined to take no chances. On February 11th, the very day which the Derby-Disraeli Government had fixed for the announcement of its Reform intentions,

¹ Irving's *Annals* gives an account which though unfriendly is revealing. "For days previously," it says, "the League party had given out that this was to be one of the most mighty gatherings yet witnessed . . . , and much pre-arrangement and negotiation was undertaken with a view to permitting it to pass along the thoroughfares in an effective and orderly manner. The day turned out to be unfavourable for such a demonstration. The anticipated 200,000 workmen dwindled down to between 25,000 and 30,000, and the march from the parade-ground, Whitehall, to Beaufort House, Chiswick, was accomplished in a quite peaceable, if somewhat irregular order. Many of them, indeed, did not reach the scene of the display till evening had set in, and some of them turned homewards without taking further part in the demonstration. One Leicester, a glassblower, spoke with special vehemence: 'The question was, would they suffer these little-minded, decrepit, hump-backed, one-eyed scoundrels who sat in the House of Commons, to rob and defraud them any longer of their rights—whether those who had squandered the people's earnings like water should continue to do so? . . . What had Lord Derby done? He had translated Homer. . . . There was not a stocking-weaver in Leicester or a clod-hopper in the kingdom, rendering service to the State who was not quite as useful as Lord Derby . . .'"

² Cf. *The Working Man*, December 15th.

³ *Speeches of John Bright*, ed. 1869, pp. 398-9.

the League succeeded in holding a most impressive demonstration despite the irritated protests that had been coming for weeks from "moderate Liberal" journals disturbed by the "unceasing agitation" and "Mr. Bright's dangerous demagoguery." A great Trades procession passed with bands and banners from Trafalgar Square through part of the West End and on to the vast Agricultural Hall, Islington, where an evening meeting was to take place. The details of this imposing procession were long recalled with pride—the large body of mounted Farriers clearing the road in front and behind them the long train of the Amalgamated Cordwainers' Society, the United Painters of Great Britain and Ireland, the West End Cabinet Makers (with a device "Bright Cabinet Makers wanted; no Adullamites need apply"), the United Curriers, the Operative Tailors, the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners (with a device "Deal with us on the Square; you have chiselled us long enough"), several Reform League branches, the Operative Bakers, the Operative Bricklayers (in twenty-two branches), ten carriages containing representatives of the National Reform League, the Irish Reform League and the Scottish Reform League, as well as deputations from Wales, Oxford, Yorkshire, Manchester, Birmingham, Halifax, Huddersfield, Newcastle, Bradford, and Brighton, the Amalgamated Engineers, the Ironfounders, the Plasterers, several Lodges of Operative Masons in their aprons, a large group of Railway Servants in their uniforms, a strong contingent of Hatters, the Reform League's suburban branches, the Shipwrights, the Seamen, the Lightermen, a great host of Temperance Societies, and finally the Excavators' Society.¹

Yet there was more direct political significance in the evening scene at the Agricultural Hall when a number of "advanced Liberal" M.P.s headed by P. A. Taylor arrived hot-foot from the House with news of how "unsatisfactory" were the Tory Government's proposals for Parliamentary Reform. The packed and excited meeting of London's most representative working men made it very plain that "pressure from without," which had already done so much, would not be given up until much more generous Reform "offers" were made than were likely to come voluntarily from a Tory Cabinet.

¹ *Illustrated London News*, February 16th, which gives also a picture of part of the procession.

HOW PARLIAMENTARY REFORM WAS
CARRIED, 1867-8

"After the artisans are once satisfied with the sympathy, ability and honesty of their leaders, no class is so tolerant of differences of opinion, or so willing to be faithful to leaders with whom they cannot wholly agree. In fact, at the present moment, notwithstanding the divergence of his wishes from theirs on many important questions, Mr. Gladstone is probably more popular with the artisans even than Mr. Bright, who, on political subjects at least, has far oftener expressed their views. The reason is to be found mainly in the business-like character of Mr. Gladstone's sympathy with the working class, the practical proof he has given that, in spite of many opposite currents of intellectual tendency, he has always been eager to lighten their taxation, to devise new security for their savings, and to welcome them in spite of political or religious differences into the organisation of the State as 'our own flesh and blood.' "

"Essays on Reform" (1867), p. 42.

"If the Reform League and Reform Union will make the ballot their next work, they must soon succeed. I need not tell you that I shall heartily join in their labours for this great end. I hope the friends of the ballot, those who care for freedom and morality in the working of our representative system, will provide the needful funds. . . ."

JOHN BRIGHT to the Reform League, August 18, 1867.

"Mr. Baxter's motion that it be an instruction to the Committee on the Scotch Reform Bill to disfranchise all English boroughs which had a population of less than 5,000 for the purpose of giving increased representation to Scotland, carried against the Government by 217 to 196 . . . Mr. McLaren proposed, 'That . . . at least fifteen additional members should now be provided for Scotland.' This was also carried against the Government by 118 to 96. They immediately met with a third defeat. . . ."

May 18, 1868 (IRVING'S "Annals," indicating Disraeli's difficulties).

THE extraordinary Parliamentary situation of 1867 has been given such full treatment in many standard Histories and Biographies¹ that it becomes the more justifiable to hold that here there is room only for a brief account. By the beginning of 1867 the continuous and sometimes alarming Radical demonstrations whose story has been told in the preceding chapter had convinced even the most obstinate of the Tory back-benchers that unless some manner of Suffrage Extension were proposed dangerous trouble was certain between the populace and the Tory Cabinet. But most Tories began by being hopeful that, to quote the words of the Queen's Speech, Suffrage Extension might be so arranged as not "unduly" to disturb "the balance of political power."²

In point of fact the time had long gone by for expecting that the Suffrage agitation could be stilled by the "most generous concessions" open to a Tory Cabinet. Indeed, Disraeli, whose indispensability as Leader of the Commons allowed him to force through the Cabinet Suffrage proposals so "dangerously" advanced above those originally intended as to drive three colleagues to resignation, must have known that even these were still well below the level of the Parliamentary need and altogether below what the Radicals would strive to extort. He was driven, perhaps not altogether unwillingly, to adopt the strange political strategy which is the leading Parliamentary feature of the Sessions of 1867 and 1868. With increasing boldness he resolutely held on to office though this involved him in the continuous "humiliation" of having to accept the unending "Radical" Suffrage amendments for which Bright and Gladstone either threatened to collect or actually did collect a "Liberal" majority.³

¹ The Buckle *Life of Disraeli* and the Morley *Life of Gladstone* are specially valuable; so is the large-scale treatment of Herbert Paul's *History of Modern England*, vol. 3.

² This wording indicates a special desire to evade the Radical pressure for systematic Redistribution. There were Radical lists, for example, showing that the Tower Hamlets, with 647,845 inhabitants, Liverpool with 443,938, and Finsbury with 387,278, had the same representation as Honiton with 3,301 inhabitants, Totnes with 4,000, and Thetford with 4,208.

³ As indicating the type of amendment forced on the Government the following may be instanced:

- (a) The reduction of the residence period qualifying for registration from two years to one (Ayrton Amendment).
- (b) The enlargement of the householder franchise in the boroughs to include the "compound householder" not hitherto paying rates direct.

How Parliamentary Reform was carried 1867-1868

Disraeli desired above all to appeal to the country at the inevitable General Election in the name of a Tory party which should have composed its old quarrel with the "people." And he had an acute realisation that the worst that could happen in Suffrage matters in such a Parliament as that of 1865 was not, if obsolete Tory traditions were shed, so very terrible after all. There were too many Whigs, Adullamites, and even so-called "Radicals" genuinely afraid of the consequences of completely unfettering the "millions," to allow Vote by Ballot, Redistribution *à la* Bright or Householder Suffrage in the Counties to be forced through to the Statute Book. Moreover, if hundreds of thousands of new working-class voters were to be created in the boroughs by householder and £10 lodger provisions, steps might be and, in fact, were taken to prevent their contributing anything like their proportionate representation to the Commons.¹ Manchester, Glasgow, and Birmingham, for example, were merely given three members each instead of two, and even so arrangements were made to ensure that the new third member should be "filched" from the democracy in order to permit of the minority representation of the rich, educated, and respectable.²

- (c) The inclusion in the borough registers of "lodgers" paying £10 a year for unfurnished rooms (Torrens amendment).
- (d) The reduction of the occupation qualification in the counties from £15 to £12.
- (e) The reduction of the copyhold and leasehold qualification in the counties from £10 to £5 (Colville amendment).
- (f) The elimination of dual voting and "fancy franchise" provisions.

¹ Originally Disraeli had proposed to confine Redistribution to 23 seats obtainable by taking 1 member each from 23 two-member boroughs with fewer than 7,000 inhabitants, and 7 more obtainable from boroughs convicted of shameless corruption. The scheme would have left such anomalies as Liverpool with 442,000 inhabitants returning 2 members and Cockermouth with 7,075 returning the same number. And even Whigs felt this could not "settle" the Redistribution question for long. Yet the Radicals could only enlist Whig support for comparatively minor adjustments of Disraeli's proposals—the increase of the Members to be taken from petty boroughs by 15; the bestowal upon Liverpool, Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham of three-member representation, etc. This inevitably meant that Redistribution was soon a subject of political agitation once more. Nor could Radicals whose motions were defeated in Parliament be prevented from showing the country how different would have been the result if the electoral scales had not been artfully weighted. In 1873 (*Hansard*, May 6th), Dilke showed how one half of the House of Commons was returned by 500,000 electors, and the other half by 2,000,000. In 1874, again, it could be proved that Liverpool and Marylebone with a combined population of 970,000 had 5 members, while 77 members were enjoyed by 77 small boroughs with an aggregate population of 720,000 (*Beehive*, January 17, 1874).

² The arrangements made did not work so inevitably as had been ex-

It seems hard, however, to believe that Disraeli would have been allowed to go as far as he did or that Derby, his chief, would have succeeded in bullying the Lords into acceptance of Disraeli's policy¹ if the temper of the populace outside Parliament had not remained dangerously restive. The winter of 1866-7 had been a very hard one with great East End distress; there was an increasingly disturbing Fenian problem both in Ireland and among the Irish of the great British cities; there was some Trade Union restlessness which unwise handling of the current "Sheffield outrages" outcry might have inflamed; and the Reform League with its strategic command of the metropolitan situation showed no intention of giving up its "alarming agitation." The international atmosphere, too, was very feverish for after the Austro-Prussian war of 1866 had allowed the adroit Bismarck to found the North German Confederation on an apparently democratic basis loudly praised by the Reform League, a great Franco-German war came ominously nearer. Nor was this all. Millions of Americans were anxious to use their *Alabama* grievances against England as justification for undertaking the conquest of British North America.

It is not difficult, perhaps, to understand why Reform League deputations to Gladstone on March 30th and to Disraeli on April 2, 1867, were received with attention.² Nor did it harm the League to have Lord Shaftesbury, fearful of a gigantic "profanation" of Good Friday, asking for the cancellation of the League's proposed processions to Hyde Park on that day. Recognising the possibility of a mobilisation of religious sentiment against them, the League leaders agreed to give up their plans, though Good Friday, as a day when the working class was free, would have yielded particularly large crowds of demonstrators. But after displaying their moderation by calling off the Good

pected. Lowe's plan of giving the cumulative vote, i.e. allowing the minority to force their candidate in by ability to give him all their three votes, would have operated more certainly than the plan actually adopted of preventing the majority from recording more than two votes.

¹ Malmesbury's *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister* (June 1867) show Derby telling a meeting of Conservative Peers that he would resign unless they accepted the Reform proposals sent up from the Commons. Such a resignation was specially feared as involving the accession to office of a Gladstone-Bright "Radical" Ministry with "extreme" Franchise Reform as its policy.

² See the pamphlet *Full Reports of the Reform League Deputations to the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone, etc.*, reprinted from the *Commonwealth Newspaper*, April 6, 1867.

How Parliamentary Reform was carried 1867-1868

Friday processions to Hyde Park and their power by co-operating in the great Eastertide demonstrations of affiliated organisations at Birmingham and Leeds, the London leaders resumed their projects of Hyde Park meetings in defiance of a Home Office ban which subsequently proved to be unwarranted by the law. The high-water mark of League pressure was, perhaps, seen on May 1st when League notices were posted declaring the illegality of the official prohibition and on the evening of May 6th when huge crowds swarmed into the Park and had perforce to be allowed to regale themselves with the oratory provided by ten League platforms.¹ It is to this kind of accompaniment from a League which now numbered one hundred branches in London alone, and whose income for the year ending April 20, 1867, had been £3,043, that the Reform debates with their long series of Conservative surrenders must be read in *Hansard*.

Yet it is questionable whether House of Commons "Liberalism" might not now on occasion have been united to force greater surrenders still if League proceedings and oratory had always had something of the decorum and propriety of those of the more middle-class National Reform Union centred at Manchester.² On May 11th, for example, the Reform Union made its great effort to restore Gladstone's authority as Head of a Liberal Opposition which was constantly being split by Whig fears of "democracy." In the fervent approval offered that day to Gladstone's Reform activities by a Union deputation, large and influential enough to overawe some of the Whig waverers, may probably be found why on May 17th Disraeli was forced to accept a famous amendment on "compound householders" which ensured the enfranchisement of more tens of thousands in the boroughs. Almost as important was the "Liberal" victory of

¹ *Illustrated London News*, May 11th and 18th. The League triumph was the greater from the fact that the Government had been planning to use force almost till the last moment. Thus large numbers of special constables had been sworn in on May 4th.

² The part of the Union had increasingly come to be the provision of platforms for those "advanced Liberal" politicians who (like Bright) did not relish speaking under League auspices and the provision of meetings for those middle-class and pro-Reform "respectables" who did not enjoy rubbing shoulders at League demonstrations with violent ex-Chartists and Fenian "poor Irish." Bradlaugh, hitherto one of the League's most successful speakers, actually resigned all his League offices on May 7, 1867, "in order to deprive the enemies of reform of the pretext for attack on the League afforded by my irreligion, and to save some of the friends of the League from the pain of having their names associated with my own" (Bonner and Robertson's *Life*, i, 235).

May 31st when thirty-five instead of twenty-three seats were secured for Redistribution by virtue of a successful amendment which moved from 7,000 to 10,000 the minimum limit of population entitling a borough to retain two members.

On Saturday evening June 1st the National Reform Union itself set the tone of a great "United Reform Demonstration" intended to impress Parliament where, of course, the struggle was far from over. The fifty-eight carriages which opened the procession with their loads of deputations from London, Birmingham, Dublin, Liverpool, Leeds, Brighton, and elsewhere, were followed by the Manchester members of the National Reform Union, and these in turn by the Trade Unions and the members of the Reform League. Moreover some twenty-five bands, and flags and banners, "numerous beyond precedent," helped Manchester to enjoy the greatest political demonstration it had ever known. Proceedings ended round six open-air platforms, and National Reform Union influence saw to it that Bright and Gladstone and not Disraeli and Derby received the credit for what had already been done at Westminster. Nor were the audiences allowed to forget how much still remained for their agitation to force through Parliament. The Ballot, Shorter Duration of Parliaments, and "an entire revision of the mode of distributing political power,"¹ were still to win and would not be won without the utmost exertion.

Both the National Reform League and the National Reform Union already had their eyes on the next General Election and meant to stay in being so that they could play what might perhaps come to be a dominating part. Though an English Reform Bill was on the Statute Book by mid-August which caused most Tories deep anxiety, the Reform League leaders, for example, resolved that their organisation needed to be kept in being both to watch over the Scottish and Irish Representation Bills whose enactment was reserved for 1868 and to forward Vote by Ballot and a wider County Franchise. Formal blessings, too, were obtained from Bright and Mill, the leaders of "advanced Liberalism" in the House, for a course which seemed to threaten alarmed Tories with the erection of two permanent organs of "agitation" of a kind they had never known before.

Yet during a Recess in which Conservatism made some notable

¹ *Illustrated London News*, June 8, 1867, p. 579.

How Parliamentary Reform was carried 1867-1868

efforts to collect demonstrations of gratitude to the Derby-Disraeli Ministry for its Reform Bill, demonstrations culminating in the surprisingly successful "working men's" assembly of November 11th in the Crystal Palace,¹ the Reform League began its rapid but inevitable descent in the scale of political importance. Now that virtually all "respectable" working men in the English boroughs had received the householder or the lodger vote, many of them began to tire of the meetings and demonstrations which had been going on for years already and would need to be continued for years longer if the League's objectives were to be attained. Again, for a large number of the Trades stalwarts in the working-class ranks the danger to their Unions from the current outcry against the "Sheffield Outrages" eclipsed everything else in importance.² Finally, the strong Irish elements which had contributed, perhaps, more than their quota to Reform League demonstrations were growing increasingly excited by the Fenian "martyrdoms." Indeed, the Irish attempt to save the "Manchester martyrs" from execution infected the Reform League and its ex-Chartist following very notably, and after their execution there were metropolitan demonstrations such as England had never yet seen. On November 24th "funeral processions" traversed different portions of London and when they met in Hyde Park to denounce the Government there was a most impressive scene as the Catholics knelt on the ground reciting the prayers for the dead and the bystanders made the responses.³

When these scenes were followed by the notorious "Fenian Outrage" of December 13th at Clerkenwell Prison, the outrage causing six deaths outright, six more from wounds, and a very large number of injuries, and when a long Fenian panic thereupon ensued,⁴ the result was conspicuously detrimental to the League. For months already the "respectable" Press had been using the occasional pro-Fenian indiscretions of operative leaders of the League like Odger, the orator-shoemaker, and Finlen, Ernest Jones's ex-lieutenant of the Chartism of the 50's, in the attempt to blacken the League out of existence. Now everything

¹ Irving's *Annals of Our Times*, under November 11th.

² See Chapter VIII.

³ Irving's *Annals*, under November 24th.

⁴ *Ibid.*, under December 19th: "In consequence of the alarming rumour regarding Fenian risings in the metropolis, large numbers of the inhabitants are on this and following days sworn in as special constables at the different police offices."

the "respectables" had said about the probable dangers arising from the League's determination to continue agitation indefinitely seemed to be confirmed.

Fortunately there were numbers of "advanced Liberal" politicians of respectability who, having worked with the League in 1866-7 and tasted of the power which it had brought to the cause of Reform, were not minded to allow it to be sacrificed at a critical moment. It had already become obvious that fundamental changes in Ireland would have to be pressed against advantageously placed Conservative resistance, and that democratic support against the anti-Popery cry would be essential to success. The very wealthy Samuel Morley, for example, who like all other Dissenting leaders recognised Irish Church Disestablishment as a pressing necessity, gave the League £250 in November 1867 when the "respectable Press" was already hot on its trail. In January 1868, again, when matters were even worse, P. A. Taylor, whose means came not from hosiery like Morley's but from Courtauld's silk, gave the League £25, and A. W. Paulton of the old Anti-Corn Law League £20. In April 1868, too, when Parliament was already engaged in the first stages of the Irish Church Disestablishment controversy, Titus Salt of the great Yorkshire woollen enterprise sent the League £100, and in June Thomas Thomasson, the parallel cotton magnate from Bolton who had done so much financially for Cobden, sent another £100. By such means it was that the League organisation was kept alive until Samuel Morley found the £1,900 which between August and November 1868 permitted its leaders to be sent on numerous "deputations" to boroughs where a useful Trade Union and working-class vote might be won for the "advanced Liberalism" of the General Election of November 1868.¹

Morley indeed allowed a good deal of his £1,900 to be used for the financing of a number of working-class candidatures in boroughs optimistically reported upon by his "deputations." Yet there is evidence to suggest that even before the General Election he was looking upon these candidatures as consolation prizes for the leaders of a League whose uses for the "advanced Liberalism"

¹ The Reports of these "deputations" in the Howell Collection of the Bishops-gate Institute make a volume very revealing of election conditions before the Ballot Act of 1872. Morley's biographer (Hodder, p. 269) gives the number of boroughs affected as 85; the number of lecturers and speakers in "constant service" as 27; and the number of Conservatives displaced as 30.

How Parliamentary Reform was carried 1867-1868

of the House of Commons were drawing to an end. In point of fact none of the prominent League leaders obtained election, partly perhaps for want of "respectability," and partly because of the failure of negotiations to provide them with suitable constituencies to contest. But the fact that the ex-bricklayer Howell, for instance, had been allowed a contest at Aylesbury and the ex-joiner Cremer another at Warwick did permit the "advanced Liberals" of the House of Commons to have the League, long a skeleton, decently interred during March 1869 without needing to fear the charge that they had betrayed their working-class allies.¹

On the Parliamentary stage, meanwhile, the year 1868 had proved to the full how much "pressure from without," whether in the shape of League demonstrations or Fenian explosions, did, on the whole, tend to strengthen Radicalism in the House of Commons. Fenianism, for example, not only induced Gladstone to make an Irish Church Disestablishment proposal his battleground for the Session, but enabled him so effectively to reunite the "Liberal party" behind it that a famous Division of April 30th left Disraeli in a minority of 265 against 330. And a Division as unfavourable as this almost of necessity forced Disraeli—Prime Minister since Derby's retirement in January—to announce that there would be a Dissolution after the Scottish and Irish Reform Bills were done with.

It was another triumph for the Radicals that Gladstone, despite his zealous Churchmanship, consented to take charge of a Compulsory Church Rates Abolition Bill. Since 1832 Radicals and Dissenters had been pressing for such a measure in vain.² Now it was not only carried through the Commons but through the Lords as well. As may be imagined, the motives of many Peers were not unmixed. That there was a desire to help the election prospects of the minority Conservative Government of the day seems obvious from the fact that the Lords chose 1868 not only for ending compulsory Church Rates but also their own proxy-voting.³ And even those Peers who thought of the Church Rates

¹ From the League papers in the Howell Collection.

² For the importance of the Church Rates controversy, see *English Radicalism 1832-1852*, pp. 112, 116-17, etc.

³ For the proxy-issue in the past, *Ibid.*, pp. 145-6. It should be noted that the Peers' right to vote by proxy was only suspended in 1868, not abolished. It would still be theoretically possible to revive vote by proxy by changing the relevant Standing Order of the House of Lords. But as was freely prophesied at the time (cf. *Annual Register*, 1868) a return to the old exercise of a particularly obnoxious privilege has proved utterly impossible.

issue purely in ecclesiastical terms were ready to agree that the Church might well gain more than it lost from the Bill. The Church had suffered immeasurably from the odium incurred in the long and bitter struggle to wring, in ever-worsening legal conditions, comparatively insignificant amounts of Church Rate from resisting Dissenters. By contenting itself for the future with the voluntary Church Rates of Gladstone's Bill, the Church would be strengthening itself for the impending struggle on Irish Disestablishment.

Meanwhile, Radical views on Parliamentary Reform were prospering better in Parliament during 1868 than had been the case in 1867. There can be no doubt but that Derby's retirement and Disraeli's appearance as Prime Minister temporarily weakened a Tory Government that had had but little authority in any case. Certainly the new Prime Minister's dexterity in gaining Whig votes with which to defeat the Radicals seemed to serve his party less in the Parliamentary proceedings of 1868 on the Scottish and Irish Reform Bills than had been the case on the English Bill in 1867. On the Scottish Bill, for example, Disraeli was finally forced to obtain the extra seven members proposed for Scotland by going back on his English "settlement" of 1867 and taking seven more seats away from the petty boroughs whose services to the Constitution had been the theme of so much Whig and Tory panegyric. On Ireland, again, when Lords and Commons came into acute conflict on Gladstone's Bill for suspending new Irish Church appointments, there were members of the Reform League who needed holding back from the renewal of Hyde Park demonstrations which might have damaged "advanced Liberalism's" now very excellent General Election chances. There was in point of fact a Hyde Park demonstration on July 18th. But it was left to the "notorious Finlen" to organise. Reform League leaders like Howell and Cremer were now only anxious not to prejudice the "respectable" against their approaching candidatures as the most advanced of "advanced Liberalism's" representatives.¹

¹ The pro-Disraelian *Public Life of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, by Francis Hitchman, thus describes the state of things political towards the end of the 1868 Session: ". . . at one time there were even threats of stopping the supplies. Fictious opposition to the Government on every possible occasion within the House was accompanied by agitation of the old dangerous type outside. Demonstrations continued to be made under exalted patronage in Hyde Park, and on one occasion Mr. Gladstone was induced to receive a deputation of roughs, headed by one Finlen, the most notorious of the pro-Fenian orators of Clerkenwell Green. Other Liberal leaders carried on the work of agitation in the provinces, and by the time that Parliament dispersed, the unpopularity of Mr. Disraeli was at its height. . . ."

How Parliamentary Reform was carried 1867-1868

A sufficiency of "advanced Liberals" was returned from the General Election of November 1868 to cause the immediate resignation of Disraeli's Cabinet and loud Tory lamentation thereafter over the alleged Radical nature of the Government which Gladstone constructed in December. It is, however, much more indicative of the true position of Parliamentary politics to note that Lowe, the fierce assailant of democracy in the old Parliament, was Gladstone's Chancellor of the Exchequer while Bright was merely his President of the Board of Trade. Or if the constituencies be regarded, the fact that not a single one of the Reform League leaders was elected would certainly seem to argue that the Constitution of 1868 was a long way short of the dreaded "democracy" of the gloomy prophets of 1866-8.¹ Even Edmond Beales, the barrister-President of the League, was not "respectable" enough to secure a majority in the Tower Hamlets, the home of the worst misery and destitution of London's appalling East End. Like Ernest Jones, the famous Chartist who had contested Manchester, he found himself defeated by middle-class "respectability's" sense that Parliament was a place for men of secure fortune only and middle-class ability to enforce its views so long as the Ballot was refused. It is perhaps not hard to see why the League's last formidable effort before its dissolution was the vain attempt to force the Ballot on to the Parliamentary agenda for 1869.

The chapter may be fitly closed by a quotation from an "advanced Liberal" election address at once succinct and representative. It becomes the more interesting from the fact that it was Passmore Edwards's at Truro. Edwards was a self-made Cobdenite publisher with an Anti-Corn Law and Peace Society record who was soon to acquire and make a great force of the *Echo*, the halfpenny evening sheet of the next two decades of operative Radicalism. Edwards, in other words, is one of the many interesting links between the Radicalism of the 40's and that of the 70's and 80's. He did, in fact, obtain a seat among the more Radical M.P.s of the Parliament of 1880-5 and lived long enough to conduct agitation against the Boer War. His Election Address of 1868, therefore, may be taken to indicate the "questions" which, thanks to Radical pressure, were in the course of becoming "practical politics," though for practitioners who were more

¹ More gloomy than any of the orators had been Carlyle in *Shooting Niagara*.

cautious than to invite defeat, as Edwards did, by putting them together into what must have seemed to the "respectable" very like a parcel of legislative dynamite.

"I would repeal," said Passmore Edwards,¹ "the ratepaying clauses of the last Reform Bill: I would place the means of education within the reach of every child in the Kingdom: I am in favour of the Ballot and an equalised distribution of Parliamentary constituencies: I would insist on a wise economy in every department of the State: I would endeavour to apply the teachings of Cobden, and cultivate a policy of non-intervention and, wherever possible, substitute arbitration for war in the settlement of national disputes: I would abolish the purchase system in the army: I would put an end to the game laws: I would make the privileges of our national universities accessible to men of every religious creed: I would do my best to make the colonies self-supporting: I would abolish death punishments and I would vote for an equalisation of the poor law and a more useful administration of charitable endowments. There are other social questions which would claim my attention such as improved dwellings for the working classes, the institution of courts of arbitration for the protection of the funds of all legally constituted trade societies, and the cultivation of waste lands and revision of the licensing system."

¹ J. Passmore Edwards, *A Few Footprints*, p. 40 (2nd edition, 1906). Passmore Edwards's Election Address is one of the most striking and prophetic of the 1868 Election. That is partly because it resumes in succinct form much that Radicalism had been occupied with for decades; and partly because it allows so much of the new "social philanthropy" admission as to be almost chargeable with "Socialism." "Cultivation of Waste Lands," indeed, had been the Owenite and Chartist remedy for unemployment (urged especially against those pressing the poor to emigrate) and "Equalisation of the Poor Law," at least in the shape of a uniform Public Assistance Rate throughout the country, is still far from attainment. In fact, Passmore Edwards's Address has been found altogether more usable as a pithy illustration of "advanced" positions than the "Working Men" Addresses and Speeches of Howell, Cremer and Mottershead, who, as avowed "working-men candidates," perhaps needed to be specially cautious in regard to the middle-class voter. Edwards's reference to the "ratepaying clauses" would seem to point to some serious imperfections in the final "compound householder" enfranchisement formula.

THE ADVANCE OF LABOUR

"A fraternity of peoples is highly necessary for the cause of labour, for we find that whenever we attempt to better our social conditions by reducing the hours of toil, or by raising the price of labour, our employers threaten us with bringing over Frenchmen, Germans, Belgians and others at a reduced rate of wages."

1863 *Placard* "To the Workmen of France from the Working Men of England" *suggesting the International*.

"Dazzled by the 'Progress of the Nation' statistics dancing before his eyes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer exclaims in wild ecstasy: 'From 1842 to 1852 the taxable income of the country increased by 6 per cent: in the eight years from 1853 to 1861 by . . . 20 per cent! the fact is so astonishing as to be almost incredible! This intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power,' adds Mr. Gladstone, 'is entirely confined to classes of property.' If you want to know under what conditions of broken health, tainted morals and mental ruin that 'intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power entirely confined to classes of property' was, and is being produced by the classes of labour, look to the pictures hung up in the last 'Public Health Report' of the workshops of tailors, printers and dress-makers. Compare the Report of the Children's Employment Commission" (of 1863).

DR. KARL MARX *in the* "Address and Provisional Rules of the Working Men's International Association" (1864).

"To go on asserting that unionism *does* not raise wages, and that to all appearance permanently, would nowadays be running completely contrary to everyday experience. To assert that it *cannot* raise them is the utmost extent to which any but the hardest theorists still venture to go. The majority of the objectors no longer deny the fact; they only pronounce the fact to be impossible. According to them, whatever augmentation of wages a union may succeed in extorting, either would have been conceded without the union's intervention, or will not be durable."

W. T. THORNTON'S "On Labour," p. 257 (1869).

BEFORE coming to grips with the strenuous Westminster politics of 1869-73, a brief survey of the principal social and mental preoccupations of contemporaries is called for. Among such preoccupations the "Labour problem" took a very prominent place, and an examination will furnish the opportunity of undertaking a brief explanation of the developments which had been proceeding of late among the Trade Unions. The "Trades" world, which had thrown itself so heartily and so effectively behind the Reform League in the Suffrage struggle of 1866-8, was becoming a world that the "Trades" of the previous generation would hardly have recognised. Increasingly, small isolated Societies were passing into Amalgamations¹ whose memberships and financial resources would have seemed miraculous before 1850. The Engineers, for example, the successful amalgamation of whose Societies in 1851 had opened the new Trade Union age, possessed in 1866 a membership of 30,984,² an income of £75,672 and a balance of £115,375.

The appeal to operatives of an Amalgamation which gave such power for Trade Defence as this, and which had, besides, a wide but carefully administered scheme of benefits also, can be seen from what happened when Allan, the Engineers' very efficient Secretary from the beginning, worked out a parallel scheme for an "Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners." Founded in 1860, the Amalgamated Society made remarkable progress, especially after the famous Robert Applegarth became Secretary. In December 1866 there were 187 branches, 8,002 members, and £13,052 of funds in hand.³ The Stonemasons, again, claimed

¹ As the word Amalgamation suggests the complete fusion of former Societies it should be observed that the term is used here to cover also Alliances, Associations, and United Societies which, if weaker centrally than an Amalgamation, were all the more easily formed.

² The 1867 Royal Commission on Trade Unions (Minority Report) recorded that by the time of reporting membership had risen to 33,325.

³ Cf. George Howell's *Conflicts of Capital and Labour*, p. 517, for a full statement, based on the books. It is unfortunate that some of the figures which follow have had to be taken from varied, and sometimes far from reliable, sources. Thus if the Ironfounders' and the Stonemasons' figures can be relied upon, the same could hardly be said of those of the Tailors (obtained from *Report of the Trades Conference held at St. Martin's Hall on March 5, 6, 7 and 8, 1867*) or the Engine Drivers. The membership claimed by some other large Societies was, according to the *Report* quoted above: London Society of Compositors, 3,300; Manchester Alliance of House Painters, 3,980; Amalgamated Union of Bakers, 3,000; Steam Engine Makers, 2,500; Power Loom Weavers' Association of Preston, 2,350; West Yorkshire Miners' Association, 2,000;

The Advance of Labour

17,762 members in 278 branches (November 1866), the Operative Bricklayers claimed 5,700 members, the Operative Bricklayers (Sheffield) 5,254, the National Association of Plasterers 5,000, the Amalgamated Tailors of England (Manchester) 11,000, the Iron-founders 10,699, the Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders 9,000, the Tailors' Protective Association (London) 7,000, the East Lancashire Power Loom Weavers 6,000, the Northern Association of Cotton Spinners 6,000, the Amalgamated Iron Workers 5,000, the Associated Carpenters and Joiners of Scotland 5,000, the Power Loom Weavers (Blackburn) 5,000, and the Engine Drivers' and Firemen's United Society 15,000. In the Miners' Mutual Association, finally, which federated such already powerful bodies as the South Yorkshire Miners' Association with 6,000 members, were combined some 36,000 mine-workers for ends which were impressively revealed in the *Transactions* of their General Conference at Leeds in November 1863, a volume of 147 pages.

The tendency towards the formation of powerful operative Amalgamations, Associations, and Federations had been notably forwarded by the increasing use of the "lock-out" method by masters engaged in trade disputes and anxious to avoid being attacked in detail by the men. A notorious example of such a "lock-out" had been seen in the Iron Trade during 1865. Here the masters, long bound in powerful Trade Associations, had already in 1864 successfully experimented both with the lock-out and a simultaneous importation of Belgian workmen intended to complete the intimidation of their key-men, the puddlers and rollers, who had lately formed an aggressive Ironworkers' Society. At the end of the year the masters decided to go farther. Alleging that the prices they were obtaining were falling owing to the increasing pressure of foreign competitors working with cheaper labour, the ironmasters imposed a wage reduction upon their men.¹ And when these attempted to make resistance by continuing work except in the area readiest for a struggle—North Staffordshire—and helping that struggle by levies on their wages, the masters applied a general lock-out. It was a dangerous step, full of obvious perils for British trade, and in point of fact was quickly retraced first in the North of England and then in South

Shipwrights of the Port of London, 1,700; Flint Glass Makers' Society, 1,668; Brass Finishers' Protective Society, 3,000; Operative Brickmakers, 1,000, etc.

¹ The Comte de Paris's *The Trades Unions of England*, pp. 96–100, contains an account of this important trade-dispute.

Staffordshire. After such a major mistake, too, on the part of the masters there was apparently some diminution of the pressure upon the North Staffordshire strikers from "public opinion" of the kind which normally assumed that strikes were due solely to the misleading of ignorant operatives by work-shy Union leaders, and that masters always acted dispassionately for the "good of the trade."

It was disputes of this type which forwarded the attempt that had long been made from Sheffield to found a National Association of United Trades, with inter-Trades assistance against "lock-outs" as one of its principal aims. Certainly the National Association's Sheffield Conference of July 1866, attended by delegates representing 180,000 to 200,000 men, seemed at one stage not unlikely to found a permanent anti-lock-out Trades Federation.¹ The International Working Men's Association, too, tended to gain a new importance even in the eyes of "practical" Society men when its uses against masters' plans of importing foreigners to break determined strikes were explained. Karl Marx, it is true, thanks to friendships with Chartist and Labour leaders dating back to 1847, had been called upon in 1864 to compose the Address with which the International Working Men's Association opened its career. He had produced, indeed, for this ambitious organisation, which soon came to include British, French, Swiss, German, Belgian, and Russian memberships, yearly brought into direct contact at annual congresses, a striking Marxian thesis. It was written on the general theme that the rich were growing richer and the poor poorer, that every new development of productive power was merely increasing social contrasts and social conflicts, but that there was universal hope in following British Labour's example of forcing Factory Legislation, succeeding with Co-operation, and pressing for political power.

British Labour leaders like Odger, Howell, and Cremer had no dispute with this order of Marxian ideas nor with the further Marxian position that it was a working-class necessity to stop by "simultaneous demonstrations" in all countries the wars, wasteful

¹ But when attempting practical anti-lock-out activity as the *United Kingdom Alliance of Organised Trades* it met with formidable troubles even in its first year (see *Minutes of Conference on September 24, 1867*, etc.). These troubles—the reluctance of those Unions to join who expected strikes rather than lock-outs and the difficulty of raising anti-lock-out levies quickly enough from the remainder—destroyed the Alliance before long. And the next big attempt at forming a working Trade Union Alliance did not come till a Glasgow Trades Conference of October 1875 planned a *Federation of Organised Trade Societies*.

of the people's blood and treasure, which were made by "secret diplomacy." Yet British Labour tended always to take a "practical" view of the immediate possibilities open to the International.¹ Marx was in 1866 already advancing the notion that the Trade Unions were paying too much attention to their immediate disputes with Capital and not enough to the revolutionary possibilities which would open if they became the champions of the miserably paid workers incapable of any Trades organisation whatsoever. But no hint of a readiness to stir the lower depths will be found, say, in the great London Tailors' strike of 1867, or in the triumphant announcement made by the men that an offensive and defensive alliance had been signed with the tailors of Paris and Brussels.² It was to be made impossible for the master-tailors of London to import strike-breaking tailors from the two continental capitals in return for an assurance from the London operatives that they would return the service in kind when their continental brethren were engaged in trade disputes. But even before the creation of the International had facilitated such types of international Trades understanding, British Union leaders had been aware of the advisability of creating machinery amicably to warn the foreign artisan of goodwill against the wiles of the strike-breaking recruiting agent. In 1863, for instance, bilingual placards of exhortation had been sent from London for posting in Paris. If by 1867 the international co-operation of "Labour" had advanced beyond this rudimentary

¹ Cf. C. M. Stekloff's *History of the First International*, p. 383 n., for Marx explaining to Engels on November 4, 1864, why he worded the foundation document cautiously and introduced phrases on "truth," "justice," "morality," "duty," and "rights": "It was very difficult to manage things in such a way that our views could secure expression in a form acceptable to the Labour movement in its present mood. A few weeks hence these British Labour leaders will be hobnobbing with Bright and Cobden at meetings to demand an extension of the franchise. It will take time before the reawakened movement will allow us to speak with the old boldness. Our motto must be for the present '*fortiter in re suaviter in modo*.'"

² The alliance of the tailors of Paris and London seems to have been negotiated partly through the *International* (see Minutes of December 11, 1866), and it is interesting to find it engaged almost simultaneously with basket-weavers and navvies imported from Belgium. Later the International gave essential service during the Engineers' strike of 1871 on the Tyne. Though it was already making heavy weather owing to being saddled with responsibility for the "horrors of the Paris Commune," it sent its own representative to stop the recruiting of "blackleg labour" in Belgium. This representative was ultimately expelled by the Belgian police, but not before he had spoiled many plans. Later he continued this work among the foreigners imported by the engineering employers and quartered in their works on the Tyne (see J. Burnett, *The Nine Hours Movement*, 1872).

stage, Marx could hardly yet have been certain how much the advance was worth.

At this significant stage in Labour history occurred the Trade Union Inquiry of 1867, ordered by the Government in view of revelations that organised "outrages" had been undertaken in the course of trade disputes by some Unions in the Sheffield and Manchester districts. The Inquiry proved conclusively that there lingered in small portions of the Trades world elements of the old conspiratorial violence which had done the Unions such harm with the "public" in the past. It was established, for example, beyond dispute that Broadhead, Secretary of the Sheffield Saw-grinders, had repeatedly offered and paid money for outrages upon masters and men who defied the Union's rules.¹ Society brickmakers in Lancashire, too, were proved responsible for arson, machine-smashing, and worse, besides such things as the placing of thousands of needles in brickmakers' clay prior to its handling by non-unionists.

¹ Irving's *Annals*, under June 19, 1867, for revelations at the Sheffield Inquiry of that day. James Hallam and Samuel Crookes had approached their Secretary because a small master called Linley "was doing a great deal of injury to them at that time, for he was employing a great many boys, and injuring the trade altogether." Broadhead's instructions were that they were to wound but not to kill Linley, but Linley was in fact killed because a shot aimed at his shoulder hit him in the head.

This information, elicited from Hallam and Crookes under certificates of indemnity, was surpassed when Broadhead gave evidence under a similar certificate on June 21st. Irving's *Annals* gives the following summary:

1. He hired Dennis Clark to blow up Helliwell for being brought into the trade contrary to rule. "We expected if he was admitted a member we should have him on the box, and it was to drive him from the trade he was blown up." Price either £3 or £5.
2. He caused the horse of Elisha Parker to be hamstrung.
3. He hired George Peace to hire some one to shoot Parker. Price £20 to £30.
4. He hired some one (he thought Crookes, the murderer of Linley) to blow up the boilers of Firth and Son. Price £5.
5. He hired Crookes to lame Helliwell.
6. He wrote a threatening letter to Messrs. Firth and Son of Sheffield, saying, "If I but move a finger you are sent to eternity as sure as fate."
7. He paid Crookes for throwing a canister of gunpowder down the chimney of the house of Samuel Baxter. Baxter had "held himself aloof from the trade," and Broadhead thought he "ought to contribute."
8. He hired Crookes to try and blow up Joseph Wilson's house. Price perhaps £10.
9. He employed Crookes to throw a can of powder down Pool's chimney. The object was "to alarm Linley, who was living with Pool."
10. He employed Crookes to blow up Holdsworth by putting powder in his cellar, for employing non-society men. Price £6.
11. He employed Crookes to blow up Reaney's house for giving Fearnough work.
12. He paid Crookes £15 to blow up Fearnough. . . .

The Advance of Labour

Revelations of this type, had they been made a decade or two before, would have brought serious peril to the whole legal existence of Trade Societies from an outraged "public opinion" eager to believe the worst. "Public opinion" had, of course, changed considerably since then, not perhaps so much because Trade Societies were accepted as fulfilling a useful social function,¹ but rather because a legal attempt to suppress or "curb" them would now be both difficult and dangerous. It is certainly significant to find that even such an "advanced" follower of J. S. Mill as Professor Fawcett was inclined when discussing Trade Unions to warn them with emphasis against the danger of driving capital abroad or to another part of the country by unwise pressure.² It is almost as significant to find that when such an "extreme Radical" as Bright undertook to defend the right to strike as "Labour's reserve power," he took care broadly to hint that in his opinion the vast majority of strikes would have been better avoided.³

¹ There had, however, long been encouraging signs even here, thanks largely to the famous *Trades Societies and Strikes* report of a Committee of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (September 1860). Here, for example, is the *Scottish Review* of April 1861, on the volume: "On the whole, the history of combination, as written in this volume, is encouraging. Like the history of freedom, in all its manifestations, it is a record of mistake, defeat, disaster, but of knowledge gradually acquired, of error constantly surmounted, of progress steadily made. . . . It is for the advantage of all of us that the industrial population be not sunk in pauperism; the best economists agree that it is to a large extent in their own power to prevent this result, and legitimate, wisely-guided combination is, perhaps, the grandest of all the natural instruments of elevation which God has put within their power." Before this Report it would have been impossible to find authoritative comment more favourable than the following of the social science quarterly *Meliora* (1859, p. 360): "Some persons are so convinced of the injurious results of trade societies that they would endeavour to put them down by force of law, forgetting that, although quite illegal, Orange societies, Ribbon societies, Freemasons' and Oddfellows' societies still exist, and some of them in greater force than at any previous period. The fact is that the associative spirit is strongly implanted in man; to suppress it is impossible; to direct it properly, or suffer for our neglect, is the only choice before us." The writer defined the proper function of Trade Unions as being the provision of aid in cases of sickness, accident, permanent disability, and death; the supply of information to workmen as to trade openings; the sending of their officials with grievances to the employer; and non-interference with the rate of wages, which was to be left to individual bargaining!

² Cf. his *Manual of Political Economy* (1st edition, 1863; 6th edition, 1883).

³ Cf. Irving's *Annals* under January 2, 1865, for Bright at the opening of the New Exchange, Birmingham: "On the subject of strikes, he said he was not sure that they should be altogether abandoned. 'I call the power to strike among workmen a reserve power, which, under certain circumstances, it may be their duty to exercise. At the same time, I think that, in my experience, in nineteen cases out of twenty, at least, the exercise of that power may be fairly questioned; and in many of these cases it has been a merciless curse to those by whom it has been exercised.'"

It is plain enough, then, why even before the "Outrages" Inquiry had been opened at Sheffield and Manchester the leaders of some of the largest Trade Societies should have taken care to come forward with voluntarily tendered evidence calculated to show what a large part their cautious Central Executives normally played in discouraging combative ardour in the branches.¹ It is plain, too, why representatives of the London Trades Council should have been combining with those of the virtually extinct National Association of United Trades in helping a Tory ex-Lord Chancellor to frame the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1867.² It was even deemed wise to call "Labour's" own "great meeting" of protest against the Sheffield outrages and to publish the proceedings.³ Action of this kind,⁴ of course, greatly helped the kindlier official forces unwilling to allow themselves to be forced by the "Sheffield revelations" into a provocative appearance of harshness to Labour. That Baron Bramwell should, on August 22, 1867, have dismissed with a mere admonition fifteen of the striking tailors convicted at the Old Bailey of "illegally practising the picket system" is only one proof of the effectiveness of the strategy adopted by the Labour leaders. An even better instance occurred in the Courts during the following March, when it was decided, in advance of specific legislation and virtually against a late precedent,⁵ that the property of a Trade Union was entitled

¹ Under the 30 Vict., cap. 8, the Examiners conducting the Sheffield and Manchester Union inquiries were only agents acting for the Trades Union Commissioners. It was to these that the Trade Society leaders' evidence was tendered.

² The 30 & 31 Vict., cap. 105. An Act to establish equitable Councils of Conciliation to adjust differences between Masters and Workmen.

³ *Report of the Various Proceedings . . . at the Great Trades Meeting at Exeter Hall, July 2nd*, to protest against the Sheffield outrages. See J. M. Ludlow's speech (p. 40): "The present . . . is a trial-time for Trade Societies. Oblivious of the fact that what we see now revealed are not the first, but, I trust, the last of trade outrages, which were formerly common to many other trades and towns than the six or eight tainted trades of Sheffield—and that the inquiry which has at last uncloaked these iniquities was asked for by your societies themselves, foolish men are raising the cry, some for the legislative suppression of Trade Societies, others, who fancy themselves more moderate, for still withholding from them those legal guarantees for their safe and open working, the absence of which forms at present the only avowed colour of excuse for the outrages in question, and tends of necessity to transform into secret conspiracies institutions otherwise of an essentially friendly though one-sided character. . . ."

⁴ Supplemented by such things as Irving's *Annals* record under February 18, 1868: "A deputation of Trade Societies' Delegates waits upon Mr. Gladstone for the purpose of explaining the actual working of Trades Unions, and of refuting the statements made by him in a speech at Oldham in December last."

⁵ The Bradford magistrates having dismissed an information under the Friendly Societies Act against an embezzling Treasurer on the ground that

to the full protection of the law.¹ The embezzling Treasurer of the Operative House Painters' Association, therefore, found his misappropriation of £800 punished by five years' imprisonment, despite his counsel's plea that a Trade Society was an association "in restraint of trade" and therefore unrecognisable by the law.

Yet undoubtedly the Unions' position might in 1867-8 have been no very secure one had they established a less complete hold of the Labour world and had the Parliamentary position been stabler. The pertinacious attempts of the employers' representatives, and especially of the well-organised Master Builders, to prove to the Trades Union Commissioners all the restrictive effects of Union regulations like those of the Operative Bricklayers or the Operative Stonemasons; the actuarial evidence advanced to display the unsoundness of the alluring Benefit rates which had enticed so many thousands into the powerful new Amalgamated Societies;² the journalistic wailings over the proof which the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1867 was alleged to

though his Trade Society had the nominal style of a Friendly Society its objects were partly those of a Trade Union, the case of *Hornby v. Close* was brought to the Queen's Bench. There the Lord Chief Justice confirmed the Bradford decision (see *Law Reports* for January 16, 1867) in the following terms: "I am far from saying that a trade union constituted for such purposes would bring the members within the criminal law, but the rules are certainly such as would operate in restraint of trade, and would, therefore, in that sense be unlawful. That is to say, if a civil action was brought on any contract or obligation arising out of the rules, they could not be recognised and enforced in such action."

¹ At the Manchester Assizes Mr. Justice Lush, after consulting with Mr. Justice Mellor, decided on March 11, 1868, that: "Although it had been held that trade societies were not within the protection of the Friendly Societies Act, and therefore could not avail themselves of the special remedies given by that Act, they were in no other sense illegal societies and their property, as well as their persons, were as much protected as the property and persons of any other society."

² When the Amalgamated Carpenters and Joiners reprinted that part of the Commissioners' proceedings which concerned themselves, they complained of the way in which their Secretary had been called upon "unexpectedly" to reply to evidence suggesting that "our contributions were inadequate to meet our liabilities, and that we could not pay the benefits named in our rules." "We recommend all our members," continued the Society, "carefully to read and to consider the statements made with reference to our financial position, as we feel assured that they will become confirmed in the conviction that experience is better than theory; understanding as they do, perhaps better than Mr. Tucker, the difference between a large insurance company, with its commodious and costly offices, its well-paid officials, and its expensive system of management, and a trade society like our own. There must certainly be something radically wrong in the calculations made when we are assured that five years' experience must prove the insufficiency of our resources, a discovery which we have failed to make at the end of seven years, the Amalgamated Engineers after sixteen years, and the iron-moulders failed to discover after an experience extending over a period of upwards of fifty-seven years; and all these societies are founded on the same principles."

furnish of the increasing advantages that the industrial competition of the Continent was deriving from the fetters imposed upon British industry by the Unions—all these, when added to the “outrage” evidence obtained at Sheffield and Manchester, made a formidable total. Indeed, in April 1868, when the Labour leaders had already lost their first fears of panic middle-class legislation following on the Sheffield “revelations,” the *Manchester and Salford Trades Council* still thought it worth while to summon what ranks in Labour history as the first of the Trades Union Congresses. The reason given for the summons was “the profound ignorance which prevails in the public mind with reference to Trade Union operations and principles,¹ together with the probability of an attempt being made by the legislature during the present Session of Parliament to introduce a measure which might prove detrimental to the interests of such societies *unless some prompt and decisive action be taken by the working classes themselves.*”² But actually the approaching General Election was perhaps to stand Labour in better stead than the first of its Trades Union Congresses. In view of the very liberal borough franchise forced from the Tory Government, M.P.s of all parties seem to have recognised that in the large industrial boroughs, at any rate, it would pay to allow the local Labour leaders to commit them not to harass “properly conducted Unions,” but, on the contrary, to offer them as a permanent inducement to such “proper conduct” full legalisation and statutory protection for their funds.

¹ W. J. Davis, *The British Trades Union Congress* (ed. 1910), p. 3. Cf. the *Family Herald* as evidence of the “public opinion” which Unionists feared (February 8, 1868): “From 1825 to the present day . . . every year exhibits its quota of brutal intimidation, terrible maiming, beating, starvation, and strikes to be put down to Trade Unions. Every year takes hundreds of thousands out of the pockets of the industrious working man, to be put into those of the loafing delegate . . . the despotism of the delegates has half-extinguished some trades, pauperised others, and made all ignorant and backward; so that, had it not been for universal exhibitions, art catalogues, the *Art Journal*, scientific associations, and other educational means which spring from the higher classes, and against which Trades Unions set their faces, England would have been worse off in the Exhibition of 1867 than she really was; and that is bad enough. . . .”

² Cf. *North British Review*, March 1868. Article “Trade Unions,” by a Journeyman Engineer, for the legislative proposals now expected: “A much more mischievous suggestion has clearly taken deep root in the minds of some of the Commissioners—namely, that trade societies should not be allowed to exist as benefit societies. . . . It has been put forward insidiously, as though in the interests of the workmen, but let it be remembered from which quarter the suggestion came. . . .”

The Trade Unions gained also from the very thorough examination of their activities undertaken by the Royal Commission. For one thing, the mere fact that the Commissioners did not make their recommendations until 1869 had its importance, for it delayed legislation until interested misuse of "Sheffield outrage" material had become impossible. Again, the more the Commission had examined and published, the more questionable had appeared the justice and policy of attempting to strike a blow at the Trade Unions. By 1869 even the sternest *laissez-faire* school,¹ clinging tenaciously to belief in the Fixed Wages Fund, and holding that wages might, indeed, be forced up in certain circumstances by unscrupulous Unions, but always at the expense of weaker sections of Labour, was coming to accept the defeat of its immediate hopes with some equanimity. It was even prepared to agree, for example, that *laissez-faire* might be held to prohibit the project once known to have been under the serious consideration of the majority of the Trades Union Commissioners, the project of recommending the complete separation of the benefit and dispute sides of the Unions. In truth it would almost seem as if the adherents of *laissez-faire* were now beginning to base their principal hopes of seeing an end of Trade Unionism on the alleged actuarial unsoundness of the Union benefit scales. Certainly a disgraceful financial collapse would bring down the Unions in a way more discreditable than any other in the eyes of the working classes.²

The recommendations of the Trades Union Commissioners

¹ James Sterling's notable *Unionism* (2nd edition, Glasgow 1869) is a good example of the thinking of this school.

² Cf. Sterling's *Unionism*, p. 43: "In the very constitution of trades' unions, as combining the character of trade and benefit societies, there lurk the seeds of weakness, if not of ultimate dissolution. . . ."

Page 45: "The prestige of their societies is great; and the credit of Unionism throughout the land, rests greatly on the general opinion of their stability and power. Were they to fall a shock would be given to the whole system. . . ."

Page 46: "Holding these opinions as to the disastrous consequences which the union of trade and provident purposes is likely ultimately to bring—we should have expected their separation to be insisted on by the earnest friends of their system with a view to diminishing an element of great future danger. But strange to say we find the supporters of Unionism clinging tenaciously to this double function: and angrily resisting every proposal for separation, as an insidious device to sap the power of the system. On the other hand, the opponents of Unionism, with no less inconsiderateness, call for the peremptory separation of the trade and provident purposes of these Unions, or at least of the funds devoted to them. They do not see that even if this could effect their object, as assuredly it can not—they would only give increased stability and permanence to the system they condemn. . . ."

virtually took the form of a "Majority Report" on fairly orthodox lines by seven Commissioners and an altogether less orthodox "Minority Report" by three. Even the majority now recognised that nothing more could be done for confining Trade Societies to the narrow field of Trade disputes than breathing a pious wish that separate Benefit Societies had been set up to handle their benefit sides.¹ But the separation of the Unions' Trade and Benefit Funds was pressed in a recommendation which would have given a "first-class certificate," carrying full "Provident Society" advantages before the law, to those Societies that not only qualified for admission to the newly projected Trade Union Register of "legal societies," but also undertook to keep their Benefit Funds satisfactorily distinct from their Trade Funds.

It was, however, the list of conditions attached to the admission of Trade Societies to the Register of "legal" combinations which showed the sway of orthodox "political economy" at its strongest, the "political economy" of consuming classes concerned above all that production should be cheap and unrestricted.² For admission to a Register which would give Trade Societies effective legal protection for their funds, the Majority Commissioners suggested that Societies should prove a good deal more than the mere absence of criminal provisions from their rules. No rules, in fact, were to be passed which contained limitations on apprenticeship, restrictions on machinery, prohibitions of piecework and sub-contract, or provisions for assisting other Trades engaged in industrial disputes. It is obvious that the evidence of the Central Association of Master Builders, which told so heavily even on the "advanced" W. T. Thornton when describing in his famous

¹ There is no need to stress the obvious truth that the majority Commissioners did not relish the fact that under existing arrangements a Trade Society, involved in a bitter dispute, might resolve to mortgage Benefit Funds to continue the struggle.

² In W. R. Greg's *Political Problems of Our Age and Country* (1870), and *Rocks Ahead* (1874) may be studied an orthodox view. Here is Greg on Trade Unions: "When we consider, first, the degree to which the cost of every article, and thereby the cost of living in the aggregate, is increased by the operation of Trade Unions; secondly, the diminished demand for labourers consequent upon the limitation of the consumption of the article they produce, caused by the enhancement of price; thirdly, the heavy tax levied in the form of contributions 'to the box' on the earnings of the artisans; and fourthly, the encouragement thus given to foreign competition . . . is it not as plain as anything can be that Trade Unions are a miscalculation and a gigantic blunder looked at even from an artisan point of view? . . ."

The Advance of Labour

book *On Labour*¹ the restrictions imposed by bricklayers and masons on the building trade, told yet more heavily on the majority Commissioners.

The Minority Commissioners, the spirited young Positivist barrister Frederic Harrison, the Christian Socialist M.P., Thomas Hughes, and the Earl of Lichfield, did not find it difficult trenchantly to traverse the majority Report. It was virtually certain, as they said, that not a single Trade Society would accept "legalisation" on the terms offered. Indeed, there was a strong Trade Society section which held that "legalisation" would be bought too dear on any terms conceivably obtainable from Parliament and which wanted as little to do with the law as possible. This section, it is true, was composed mainly of the smaller Societies, the protection of whose funds did not present quite the same problems as were worrying the greater Amalgamated Societies. The "Conference of Amalgamated Trades," however, led by Allan of the Engineers, Applegarth of the Carpenters and Joiners, Guile of the Ironfounders, Coulson of the Bricklayers, and Odger of the Shoemakers—the famous junta of the Webbs,² which had been acting as the acknowledged voice of "Labour" for years and as such had done some very effective work before the Trades Union Commissioners—took another view. They were in hopes of being able to persuade the politicians to adopt the Minority Report, and this would have meant more than the gain of "legalisation" without other condition than that the rules should not enjoin anything illegal. The Minority Report had strongly recommended the removal from the law of the special operative grievances in regard to the "conspiracy" inter-

¹ Cf. W. T. Thornton's *On Labour* (1869), pp. 329-31: "In the building trade, working too fast is technically called chasing. . . . At Liverpool, a bricklayer's labourer may legally carry as many as 12 bricks at a time. Elsewhere, 10 is the greatest number allowed. But at Leeds, 'Any brother in the Union professing to carry more than the common number, which is 8, shall be fined 1s. od.; and any brother knowing the same without giving the earliest information thereof to the Committee of Management shall be fined the same. . . . It is when masters are entangled with time-contracts which they are bound under heavy penalties to fulfil, yet cannot fulfil without the co-operation of their men, that they are most completely at the mercy of the latter. . . . According to the rule of the Glasgow Bricklayers' Association, 7d. an hour being the ordinary wage, overtime is to be paid at time-and-a-half, and Sabbath work at double time, and, in the case of a country job, the fares going and returning and likewise full wages for the time spent in travelling. . . ."

² *History of Trade Unionism*, Chapter 5. Cf. G. D. H. Cole's *Short History of the British Working Class Movement*, ii, 99-101, for Junta success against "Labour" opponents.

pretation of certain sides of combination and the surviving inequities of the law of "Master and Servant."¹

The franchise changes of 1867-8 had certainly produced a House of Commons and a Government under some obligations to the artisans of the towns. Accordingly Gladstone's Home Office was persuaded to press a temporary Act through Parliament at the close of the Session of 1869 which gave Trade Union funds protection without the special conditions recommended by the Majority Report. Though the Government's conduct was strongly condemned by the Conservative leader in the Lords, the temporary Act was not meant to indicate the Government's permanent policy in regard to Trade Unions, but merely to furnish a *modus vivendi* until long-term legislation could be drafted.

This long-term legislation, in the shape of a Trades Union Bill, was ready for Parliamentary treatment in March 1871,² and it was more than a coincidence that a Trades Union Congress was assembled in London almost simultaneously. Moreover, it set to "lobbying"³ with such assiduity as promptly to cause the Government to divide its proposals into two Bills, the reasonably acceptable Trade Union Bill, containing the "legalisation" conditions, and the very unacceptable Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which the Unions bitterly contested. For all the jejune affectation of establishing equal treatment for masters and men painstakingly maintained throughout the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, the Unions could not be prevented from seeing that it was the men and not the masters who would appear in Court charged with "coercion," "intimidation," and the like. Moreover,

¹ There had been consistent operative pressure as to the law of "Master and Servant," for many years, as well there might be seeing the facility masters had of securing the arrest of men leaving work without notice. The Glasgow Trades Council led the fight under the guidance of the Owenite Alexander Campbell, now editor of the Trades paper, the *Glasgow Sentinel*. The *Report of the Conference on the Law of Masters and Workmen under their Contract of Service . . . held in London on 30th and 31st May and the 1st and 2nd of June, 1862*, shows a veritable Trades Union Congress to have been assembled on the question as early as 1862.

² *Beehive*, February 28, 1871, contains the first "Labour" comment on the Government Draft Bill already in circulation. G. Howell comments that "the gentlemen who framed the Bill evidently had Sheffield on the brain during the whole process of drafting, for on no other hypothesis can we account for the numerous provisos in the criminal section," and one of the editorials proposes that the Home Secretary should be asked "to define such loose words as 'violence,' 'threats,' 'intimidation,' 'molestation,' and obstruction."

³ *Ibid.*, March 11th, for the Deputation Alexander MacDonald led to the Home Secretary

The Advance of Labour

picketing had been struck at in especially wide and dangerous terms, which were to be further improved upon in the Lords.¹ From their experience with Court interpretations of "molestation" and "obstruction" the Unions knew what was going to happen when picketing cases were dealt with under the new wording.

Before dispersing, the Trades Union Congress of 1871 created an important new organ destined henceforward to become the political representative of the Trades, the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress.² Howell, its Secretary from 1871 to 1875, was in charge of the assiduous "lobbying" it carried on until Disraelian Toryism seized the chance of "confering" another "benefit" on the working classes after the Gladstonian Home Office had come to terms too late. Certainly Unionism was a force well worth conciliating in 1875 even by the strongest Government. Unions had spread, for example, even to the agricultural labourers, with results which were for a time astounding,³ while the Trades Union Congress of 1874 had claimed to represent 1,192,922 organised workers.

"LABOUR REPRESENTATION"

There had not been waiting candid friends of "Labour" who had sought to take advantage of the rebuff inflicted on its rising hopes by the Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1871 to read some of the more careerist of the Labour leaders a lesson. Since the money of Samuel Morley had allowed a small group of them to go on well-paid "deputations" through the country during the election campaign of 1868 and then to contest a number of borough seats, Parliamentary ambitions had grown ever stronger with them. That acute and plain-spoken "friend of Labour," Professor Beesly, certainly thought the time had come to issue a warning in good set terms.⁴

¹ *Beehive*, June 24th: "The bantling of Mr. Bruce (Home Secretary) was ill-favoured enough to begin with, but the Lords have made it worse, and the mill-owners in the commons have thanked them for the service. Working men now know therefore to whom they owe the new shackles forged for them."

² W. J. Davis, *History of the British Trades Union Congress*, for a collection of material permitting the importance of this step to be judged.

³ Chapter XII below for details of the advance of "Labour" during the "boom" conditions ruling in 1871 and the two years following.

⁴ *Beehive*, July 29, 1871.

"I cannot help thinking," he wrote in his customary article in the *Beehive*, "that the interests of trade societies have suffered by the bad management of their own leaders. If some of them would think a little less about getting into Parliament themselves, and a little more about organising an effective pressure upon the representatives of large constituencies the result might be different. I attended several meetings of the Congress last March, and it seemed to me that the delegates were under a complete delusion as to their own power and the temper of the House of Commons. They talked as if they had only to pass a resolution, and it would be sure to be received with deference by the House. Anyone listening to them might have imagined that they themselves were the Legislative Assembly instead of being . . . a weak, uninfluential body with less power to sway the decision of the House than half-a-dozen brewers or directors of gas companies. . . ."

Yet though these criticisms of Labour leadership were not wholly undeserved,¹ few advanced politicians—and least of all Professor Beesly himself—would have attempted to deny the expediency of direct "Labour" representation in the Commons. During the next four years, indeed, there was such continuous operative exasperation with the Courts' interpretation of the "Labour Laws"² that considerable efforts were being made to found working-class Labour Representation agitations, independent altogether of the political Radicals. Here is one circular of 1872, issued very widely to the Trades over the signatures of Alexander MacDonald of the Miners, William Allan of the Engineers, and George Howell of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress:³

We have been deluded with promised reforms, but those we most desire are neglected and unduly deferred, whilst measures affecting the welfare of the wealthy classes are constantly studied, actively promoted . . . upon the question of the direct Representation of the Industrial Classes

¹ An acquaintance with the career of, say, George Potter or even George Howell would reveal the sometimes discreditable shifts that financial exigencies were apt to force upon "Labour leaders" who had left their occupations for agitation. Trade Union posts were then few and far between, and, in any case, called for administrative talents and exertions rather than platform work.

² Cf. S. and B. Webb's *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 268: "In 1871 seven women were imprisoned in South Wales merely for saying 'Bah' to one blackleg. Innumerable convictions took place for the use of bad language. Almost any action taken by Trade Unionists to induce a man not to accept employment at a struck shop resulted, under the new Act, in imprisonment with hard labour. The intolerable injustice . . . was made more glaring by the freedom allowed to the employers to make all possible use of 'black-lists' and 'character notes.' . . . No prosecution ever took place for this form of molestation and obstruction." This passage, though perhaps on an exaggerated note, well represents working-class indignation.

³ The title is *The Direct Representation of Labour in Parliament*.

The Advance of Labour

in Parliament all are agreed. On this one point we invite all sections of working men to combine, irrespective of minor differences in principle or policy, and thus prepare the ground for that grand work of Labour Emancipation, which at the moment is everywhere making its advent felt and which in Parliament needs friendly aid. . . .

The anger excited by the twelve months sentences inflicted in December 1872 on a number of striking London gas-stokers, found guilty of "conspiring" to "coerce" their masters, proved an especially important factor in promoting the "Labour Representation" agitation. By the time of the General Election of 1874 there were not only twelve candidates ready to take the field on a specifically "Labour" basis, but a League, founded in 1869 and known as the Labour Representation League, authenticated their candidatures and issued Trades appeals on their behalf over the best-known Trades names in the country.¹ From the polling of 1874, as is well known, resulted the first two "Labour" entries into the Commons, Burt of the Northumberland Miners for Morpeth, and Alexander Macdonald of the National Miners organisation for Stafford. Most of the other "Labour" candidates, if unsuccessful, polled reasonably well.

It may be of interest to set out here, perhaps, the most representative of the "Labour" Election Addresses of 1874, that of John Kane, who had built up a strong Ironworkers' Union on Tees-side and opened a contest for the representation of Middlesbrough with some hopes of displacing the sitting member, the Gladstonian ironmaster Bolckow. Here are Kane's words:²

¹ *The Ironworkers' Journal*, March 1, 1874, gives the Address which it had circulated "to the Working Class Voters of the United Kingdom" as follows:

"Fellow Workers . . .

"The long-expected electoral struggle is at last upon us. . . . There are at the present moment several Labour candidates in the field, and we ask you . . . to vote for them without hesitation. We tell you that in doing so you will not be acting in an exclusive class-spirit. As a class you desire no *pre-dominance* in the counsels of the nation; but as honest men and self-respecting citizens, you desire to put an end to that most unjust class *exclusion* from which the great labour class of the country alone suffer. . . .

"You have yet to struggle for a complete religious equality; for a sound economy in the national expenditure: for such changes in the tenure and transfer of land as will give security to the farmer, and comfort to the labourer; for such improvement in our electoral system as shall be equitable to all: in fact for such acknowledgement of rights and extension of power in regard to the mass of the British people, as will enable working men to effect the complete emancipation of Labour. . . ." Allan of the Engineers signed as Chairman, Guile of the Ironfounders as Treasurer, and Broadhurst of the Stonemasons as Secretary. *The Ironworkers' Journal* gave the Address as coming from the "Land and Labour League."

² *Ibid.*

You are aware that in the past Parliament every interest has been represented except that of Labour, and as I have had the honour of having been connected with the Working Classes for many years; and believing that my labours have been of service to them, I shall avail myself of the invitation that has been given to contest your borough . . . in the interest of Labour as well as of Capital.

My political opinions have been known to all classes in the Northern Counties for more than 25 years, having laboured to extend the franchise to the manhood of the nation: and as much remains to be done before that object can be attained, I shall continue to work in the cause of political progress with the assurance that victory will be ours.

On the question of the County Franchise, it must be assimilated with the Borough franchise before the pauper-priced labour of the Agricultural Workers ceases to degrade the Working Men and Women of the Counties: my services shall be given to the furtherance of this object which will give social comfort and prosperity, and will destroy the monopoly and power that has too long been held by the money changers and the landed aristocracy.

On the Education Question I believe, with a large party throughout the country, that the Education Bill needs amending.

I would vote for the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Established Church of this country; and for the removal of the Taxes on such articles as would give us what John Bright has long taught, viz. a Free Breakfast Table.

Since the Abolition of the Irish Parliament and the Establishment of the Union, great dissatisfaction has existed in the Sister Isle. The present agitation for the repeal of these laws, and for a Parliament of their own, on the basis of Home Rule, would receive my entire support.

(A passage follows in which the entire programme of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress was adopted. (1) Repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act. (2) Alteration of the Masters and Servants Acts so that breach of contract shall not be a criminal offence. (3) Alteration of the Law of Conspiracy . . . (4) Reconstruction of the Small Penalties Acts on the principle that imprisonment shall only be used as a method of enforcing payment . . . as a last resort. (5) Consideration by Parliament of the important constitutional question of what limit should be placed upon the summary jurisdiction of magistrates . . . (6) . . . a Royal Commission as to the state of the law and procedure relating to summary jurisdiction . . . (7) Reduction of the qualification of jurymen to admit workers. (8) Alteration of the Law so that workmen or their families may be able to sue employers in the event of injury or death due to negligence. (9) A Factory Nine Hours Bill for women and children. (10) An Act to prevent truck by making weekly payments in the current coin of the realm to workmen compulsory. (11) An Act for the better protection of seamen's lives by preventing the sending of unseaworthy vessels to sea.)

As I have not waited on you personally, I hope you will not consider it disrespectful, but I scarcely think it consistent with the spirit of the

The Advance of Labour

Ballot Act. . . . As I always opposed the use of cabs at elections, I shall not use any on this occasion but trust to the independence of my supporters to walk to their respective polling-booths. . . .”

The Middlesbrough polling figures are certainly worth giving after this long preamble. They were: Bolckow (Liberal), 3,719; Kane (Radical), 1,541; Hopkins (Conservative), 996.

The pressure for Labour Representation did not cease after the Disraeli Government had in 1875 conceded to Labour a Trade Union code more after its own heart. In November 1875, for example, the Labour Representation League may be found issuing a new appeal to the nation¹ at the time that its perhaps most active constituent, the Birmingham Labour Representation Committee, was congratulating itself on the result of a local School Board contest which had made history.² Labour Representation, in fact, for all the temporary collapses of its national leagues and its local associations or committees, was a cause with a future.

¹ *An Address to the People of Great Britain*, asking for: “Household Suffrage in the Counties . . . ; Redistribution of Political Power . . . ; Repeal of Primogeniture and Entail (the millions of acres now lying waste, or kept as preserves for game, and sporting grounds for the wealthy, should be cultivated, thereby giving employment to our agricultural labourers and providing home-grown food for the masses of our people); The Game Laws to be abolished (Summary proceedings 1874, 11,985: 1873, 10,870—increase last year, 1,085); Taxation enormous and excessive—the poor taxpayer should be still further relieved, and especially of those taxes which are imposed on raw material and production; Expenditure . . . amounts annually to the monstrous sum of Seventy-Five Millions Sterling. Such vast expenditure represents nothing but wasteful extravagance, inefficiency, and gross incompetence in every spending department of the State . . . ; The incidence and amount of Local Taxation are intimately connected with Local Self-Government, a subject too long neglected by public . . . men.” The most striking thing about this manifesto is the way “Labour” in the pre-Socialist age was driven to take the main part of its political programme from the tritest anti-landlord and anti-extravagance shibboleths of the narrower commercial Radicals. Yet modern economists are inclined to blame the cheeseparing attitude of the Exchequer of this time for part of the country’s inability to shake off the long depression which set in in 1874!

² Dalley’s *Life of W. J. Davis*, pp. 44–8. Nominated by the Birmingham Labour Representation Committee despite a recent pronouncement of John Bright on the unwisdom of “Labour”’s committing itself to “class representation,” W. J. Davis, Secretary of the Brassworkers’ Society, obtained a poll of some 10,000 against the successful candidate’s 10,500. After this exhibition of strength the Chamberlainite Radicals decided to let him have a walk-over in 1876, especially as he was willing to support their School policy though as a “Labour” man. Here is a portion of his address: “I am ready to fight once more for the class to which I belong, to have representatives among a body for the purpose of managing schools filled mainly by our children. . . . I trust to seeing arrangements made that shall enable those who manifest the possession of superior gifts to be drafted from the common schools to those of a higher grade. By placing our magnificently endowed Grammar Schools under the control of the people’s representatives . . . this may be accomplished with ease and economy.”

When in 1900 an immensely strengthened Trade Union movement took direct charge of an effort to increase the number of "Labour" members in the House, there was a quarter of a century of history in the reason for the organ it created for electoral purposes being named the Labour Representation Committee.

SOME OTHER INTERESTS OF "LABOUR"

The formation of powerful Unions, strong enough politically to obtain a more assured legal status for themselves and strong enough industrially to achieve a better standard of living for their members, was far from being the sole interest of "Labour" during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. To follow the great development of the Friendly Societies, through which, in the absence of State provision, "Labour" had sought to insure for sickness and burial benefits, is to become convinced of the surprising organising and financial skill that went to the building up and operation of the central and local machinery of such huge institutions as the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Ancient Order of Foresters. With 436,918 British members in 1872,¹ the Independent Order of Odd Fellows was already a colossal as well as a most carefully managed organisation; the Foresters, with 400,217 members, were almost as numerous; and even smaller societies like the Druids, the Shepherds, the Free Gardeners, and the Rechabites counted their members in thousands and tens of thousands without depriving small village and district societies of the chance of leading active local lives. Local Benefit Building Societies, operating schemes to enable associated workmen to provide themselves with houses of their own, formed another important feature of many thrifty working-class lives.² Then the number of working men actively engaged in running Working Men's Clubs and serving as committeemen in Co-operative Societies must have been very large. In 1863, for example, before the great age of Co-operative expansion associated with the activities of the English and Scottish Wholesale Societies had begun, the number of Co-operative Societies was being estimated at 460.³

¹ Baernreither, *English Associations of Working Men*, p. 221.

² The first Act specifically devoted to these societies seems to have been one of 1836, the 6 & 7 Will. IV., cap. 32.

³ J. McCabe, *Life and Letters of G. J. Holyoake*, ii, 348.

The Advance of Labour

The establishment of Co-operative production represented, of course, the ultimate ideal to which it was hoped Co-operative distribution would conduct. In the meantime the plight of Labour under conditions of competitive production, in which private profit increased as Labour was harder driven and more poorly paid, was the never-ending theme of working-class thought and speech. If stronger Trade Societies seemed to offer one approach to juster conditions in industry, the "Short Time Unions" of the textile districts discovered in the 1830's, 1840's, and 1850's that the effect of appeals to the humanitarian sentiments of powerfully placed upper-class philanthropists could be very far-reaching.¹ How the long series of Factory Acts, Factory Acts Extension Acts, and Factories and Workshops Acts, which have done so much to humanise industrial conditions, were being won after 1833 from a Parliament not fully cognisant of the industrial strategy of the operatives concerned, cannot be told here. Suffice it to say that by alarming Parliament as to the national future if the physical and moral deterioration of overworked or night-worked women and children were not stopped in the factories, the male textile operatives had succeeded by 1874 in establishing textile factory conditions that made it almost impossible for the men to be profitably employed for more than the 56½ working hours per week permitted to women. Moreover, the precedents continually being set by the textile factories between 1833 and 1874 seemed unanswerably to dictate the standard of woman and child protection to be established first in related industries, then in all factory-conducted industries, and finally throughout the entire industrial field. From some points of view the Factory Acts Extension Act of 1867 and the Workshops Regulation Act of the same year will be found to register the most important advances of social principle effected in any single year during the century.²

But the inhibitions induced by "scientific political economy"

¹ Cf. *Meliora*, Second Series, 1853, p. 105, for a Chartist's article printed by this Christian-Humanitarian production: "... we have often foolishly used all our exertions to nullify the efforts of those less radical upper- and middle-class reformers, who certainly have the power, and, perhaps, sometimes the will to do us valuable service. Many of us are getting wiser, and have changed our policy. We now consider it an error to oppose reformers of any class, and are willing to go with them as far as they go. But we are Chartists not the less..."

² The best short treatment of a not unexciting subject is in Hutchins and Harrison, *A History of Factory Legislation*. The Workshops Regulation Act is notable as bringing even the domestic workshop under control.

were still so strong that the legislation of 1867 was badly clogged by exceptions.¹ Moreover, there was almost an agreed conspiracy of silence on the subject of the possible need of giving adult men legislative protection from overwork, excessive nightwork, and other conditions deleterious to health. And, presumably from policy, "Labour" rarely found it advisable to break that silence or depart from the plan of obtaining what legislative control of industrial conditions was possible from pushing the plight of women and children to the front. Yet in two industries especially—mining and baking—the claim for legislative regulation even on behalf of adult men was being pressed strongly enough and with sufficiently weighty evidence to threaten the widest breach in the defences of "political economy" against universal legal regulation of the conditions of labour.

To deal with the less important first, the case of the London journeymen bakers was already making some noise as early as 1850, and well it might, seeing the 112 hours per week that many of the men were admittedly working and the filthy conditions in which they were living and labouring on the capital's bread. Yet when the philanthropic Early Closing Association² was induced to take up the men's case with the masters, these gave such "sound" commercial reasons for their inability to alter the existing practices of the trade that the Association was left with very little ground to stand on. The capital could not apparently get both hot rolls for early breakfast and bread for the remainder of the day unless existing practices were continued, or the masters allowed to pick their own twelve discontinuous hours from the operative's twenty-four, a remedy in some respects worse than the disease. The operative bakers' case was again being urged before the Social Science Congresses of 1857 and 1859, and finally a deputation from the Operatives' Society of Bakers, with a plan of a twelve-hour day from 4 a.m. to 4 p.m., sought Lord Shaftesbury's help. It is interesting to learn that when he heard of possible preparations for a strike he "succeeded in dissuading them from so suicidal a measure, and advised them to

¹ Cf. Hutchins and Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 169: "The list of modifications and exceptions in this Act (The Factory Acts Extension Bill) is a long one, occupying twice as many pages as the sections themselves. . . ."

² *Meliora*, vol. 5, p. 127. This Association, though it discountenanced Unions, strikes and other elements likely to cause "bad feeling," had actually done something to reduce hours in shops.

The Advance of Labour

keep their hard case well before the public, and avoid, as long as possible, any appeal to the legislature.”¹

Home Office attention, however, was aroused to the bakehouse question by consideration for London’s health, and it certainly seemed endangered if the continual allegations being made against bakehouse conditions were justified. A departmental investigation was therefore ordered, and in 1862 Parliament and the nation at length received a shocking account of the filth, adulteration, and oppression which unregulated private enterprise employed to satisfy unregulated private appetite.² But when bakehouse regulation came in 1863³ and some checks were put on the filthiest “practices of the trade,” nothing was done to shorten the working hours of adult male operatives, and even the “young persons” were left exposed to a working day beginning at 5 a.m. and ending at 9 p.m. To have commenced the Parliamentary limitation of adult male hours even for the admittedly overworked bakers would have been, it was felt, to have admitted a principle whose application could not have been stayed until it had penetrated all industry.

The miner’s pressure on the standards of orthodox political economy came from another direction. The growing seriousness of colliery accidents during the 1840’s caused the men increasingly to question the methods of the mining managements and increasingly to demand close supervision of mining operations by the State. Here, for example, is an extract from a powerfully supported petition dated as early as 1847:⁴

Your petitioners submit to your Honourable House that inspectors should be appointed to visit all the mines, and that some of these inspectors should be men acquainted with colliery work; that such inspectors should see that accurate maps are made of all the workings of the mines; that these inspectors should grant licences to mines when they consider that due provision and care has been used to prevent accidents and ensure good ventilation; and that without such licence no mine should be permitted to work. That penalties of £100, at the least, should be inflicted in case of any deviation from the order of such inspector; and that such penalties should be paid half by the landlord

¹ *Meliora*, vol. 5 (1863), p. 128.

² *Report addressed to Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State . . . relative to the Grievances complained of by the Journeyman Bakers, 1862.*

³ 26 & 27 Vict., cap. 40.

⁴ Quoted by Boyd, *Coal Mines Inspection*, p. 81. It formed the basis of the Miners’ Association Bill, introduced by the Radical Duncombe, on June 16, 1847, and discussed both then and on June 30th (*Hansard*).

and half by the tenant of the mine, and should form a fund for the support of the families of those who die from explosions or other accidents in the mines. . . .

The demands here advanced were, of course, regarded by the "Coal Trade" as preposterous, and even the "philanthropic public" looked upon them as altogether more unpractical than the pitmen's claims for "payment by weight" and a new Truck Act.¹

Yet, under the pressure of an unceasing stream of colliery accidents, legislation began reluctantly and slowly moving in the direction desired by the men. Thus an Act of 1850 had appointed Government Inspectors, with the right of examining all underground workings, indicating defects, and requiring the production of mine plans, whose preparation and correct maintenance, indeed, was only now made a statutory duty of the mining management. Unfortunately, during the operation of this Act Inspectors were kept so busy attending inquests and compiling accident records that the regular quarterly inspection of all pits, which the men desired, proved almost ludicrously out of the question unless an inspection service was undertaken of altogether larger scope than Parliament was yet prepared for. Even under the stress of the dreadful accident figures of 1851 to 1854,² therefore, Parliament sought for a remedy by enacting that seven specified general rules of colliery working, recommended to it by a conference of the "Coal Trade," should be compulsory, and that in addition every colliery should frame its special safety rules, departure from which was to be punishable.³ It was characteristic of what was denounced as a "master's measure" from the first, despite its provision of more Inspectors, that its clauses were based on the resolutions of a Conference which had contained forty-nine owners' representatives, six Inspectors, and only four pitmen.⁴

But the accident history of 1855-9 was bad enough to give

¹ The men hoped that payment by the ton of coal would prove less open to abuse than payment by the chaldron. And they desired an Act which should require each man to be paid separately, weekly, and in money.

² *Meliora*, vol. 2, p. 154, for a simplified regrouping of the Inspectors' figures. With a mining population of about 200,000 there had been in 1851, 984 fatalities; in 1852, 986; in 1853, 957; and in 1854, 1,045.

³ 18 & 19 Vict., cap. 108.

⁴ Boyd, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

The Advance of Labour

pitmen influential humanitarian¹ support in securing an Act of 1860 somewhat more satisfactory to themselves than had been that of 1855. Mines inspection, for example, was now put on a permanent instead of a merely temporary footing, and payment by weight was conceded. But grievances and perils enough remained and to spare, and it was to put themselves into a stronger position to get these dealt with that the pitmen formed the Miners' National Association in 1863, with a programme of safeguarding "the interests of operative miners, as regards legislation, the inspection of mines, and compensation for accidents." This Association it was which, under the leadership of Alexander Macdonald, launched and sustained the agitation that produced the great mining legislation of 1872, the Mines Regulation Bill for the colliers, and the Metalliferous Mines Bill for other types of mining often fully as dangerous.

Much as colliery owners disliked some of the aspects of the mining legislation of 1872,² it far from completely satisfied the men.³ These were now anxious for such things as Sub-Inspectors who had had practical experience at the coal-face, a Minister of Mines with a seat in the Commons, the exclusion of all boys under twelve years of age from the pits as a danger to themselves and others, and, finally, an eight-hour day for boys under sixteen. For ends like these, and in order to win greater safety, better facilities for check-weighing, and completer protection against colliery deductions in the nature of truck, a miners' agitation continued until the Coal Mines Regulation and Truck Acts of 1887 were obtained.⁴ But by that time a new

¹ Cf. *Meliora* (vol. 2) for a very strong article on "Death in Coal-pits," alleging that the Act of 1855 "is to a very great extent ineffective, as well as partial . . . ; that Government inspection of coal-mines is very incomplete and unsatisfactory; and lastly, that more stringent measures ought to be enforced by the legislature, and a large and efficient staff of inspectors appointed. . . . It is true that explosions like those at Lundill, Cymner and Ashton, are not constant occurrences; yet during the intervals of such wholesale destruction it repeatedly happens that three, six, eight, or twelve men are killed at one time, either by explosion, the slipping or breaking of ropes and chains, falls of coal and roof, or falls in shafts . . ."

² For example, the requirement that all managers should pass an examination for a certificate of competency, the putting upon the management of the responsibility for the safety of the working-places in the pit and the right of the men working in the pit to ask for an occasional safety inspection of their own.

³ The creation in districts relatively unoccupied by Macdonald's Association of a second powerful miners' organisation, the Amalgamated Miners, seems to have increased pitmen's combativeness.

⁴ Cf. Peace, *Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, and Truck Acts, 1831 and 1887*. for a full treatment of these Acts.

English Radicalism 1853-1886

social vision was beginning to spread throughout the more hopeful section of the working class, and the Scottish Miners especially worked hard to insert into the Coal Mines Regulation Act provision for a maximum eight-hour working day.¹ Like the spinners of 1833, however, the Scottish coalminers of 1887 were moved by more than the mere vision of creating a less harried and more beautiful social life. The eight-hour movement, like the ten-hour movement before it, was accepted by many of the hard-headed, sceptical of Socialism, as the only way to stop "overproduction," and the train of disasters that the consequent glut brought to the working class under existing conditions. Yet it is significant of the progress of ideas during the intervening half-century that an eight-hour day was now demanded for male adults without any necessity being felt for effecting the "advance" behind a screen of women and children.

¹ Cf. S. Webb and H. Cox, *The Eight Hours Day*, p. 23. A Lancashire Miners' Federation had previously adopted the policy in 1883.

RELIGION

"There are scholars in England with ample leisure and fortune, with nothing to fear or to suffer, except that somebody whom they despise would speak ill of them if they spoke out—who never write a line to tell their poor and less fortunate countrymen of the errors they have imposed on them by half-educated, earnest but misinformed and pernicious preachers. Look at the poverty and limited knowledge of Freethinking Literature, unhelpt by gentlemen who know better. . . . What might not heresy be if gentlemen in England had courage and scholars consciences? Bishop Colenso is almost a new thing in England. . . ."

HOLYOAKE'S "Secular World" on *Bishop Colenso*, December 1, 1862.

"Perhaps there is more intellectual activity, if not intellect, enlisted in the work of sects and creeds than in any other career except money-making. Religion, in one form or another, stimulates and vivifies the daily life of the English people in a remarkable degree. Still, I believe it to be true, that the strongest mental power, the finest thought, the highest intelligence among us, is yearly diverging more and more from Christianity, is discarding all faith in it. . . . The preponderant intellect in every line—statesmanlike, legal, scholarly, scientific, literary, industrial—is no longer *believing*, is, as a rule, distinctly *unbelieving*; and I venture to say this in the face of such flagrant and splendid contradictions as are offered by the names of Gladstone, Selborne, Acton, Faraday and Wordsworth: well knowing also that the greater names I might, if it were not unseemly, quote in proof of my assertion, would in many cases not be ready to avow their disbelief. . . ."

W. R. GREG *urging a revision of Creeds* in "Rocks Ahead," 1874 (*p.* 128).

"In very large proportion, probably the majority of the operative classes in towns are total unbelievers, and these are not the reckless and disreputable, but, on the contrary, consist of the best of the skilled workmen . . . among working men (scepticism) is for the most part absolute atheism, and is complicated by a marked feeling of antagonism towards the teachers of religion, a kind of resentment growing out of the conviction that they have been systematically deluded by those who ought to have enlightened them. . . ."

Ibid., *p.* 130 (*cf.* *The Salvation Army's* "Heathen England," 1878).

FEW periods of equal length have seen such important changes in religious thought as occurred between 1853 and 1868. During these years "advanced ideas" of several kinds undoubtedly gained an astonishing series of successes in undermining "faith" of the old type among important sections of the "governing classes." Conscientious Christians who had succeeded with some effort in accommodating their "faith" to the awkward contradictions between *Genesis* and the discoveries of geological science were being forced almost continuously to ever new and ever more soul-searching accommodations. A new German school of "Higher Critics," more reverent and traditional altogether than the Deists and Strauss, had begun a careful investigation of the New Testament text with startling results. In Darwin and Wallace the science of Zoology produced the propounders of hypotheses which struck deadlier blows at old-fashioned "Schemes of Creation" even than those of Lyell and his brother-geologists. Finally, a number of Anglican scholars, abandoning what had become almost a "conspiracy of silence," threw aside the veil and themselves boldly joined in the most extreme "Higher Criticism."¹ What is more, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, led by that "mocking unbeliever" Lord Chancellor Westbury, effectually prevented their "punishment" for "heresy."²

It is necessary to quote to give an adequate idea of why the alarmists cried out aloud that the existing fabric in Church and State could not stand unless suitable measures were taken against the new infidelity. The greatest of the German "Higher Critics" was Baur and the greatest of his works were *Paul the Apostle* (1845), *Critical Investigations of the Canonical Gospels* (1847), and *Christianity and the Christian Church of the First Three Centuries* (1853). As the result of Baur's investigations gradually became known throughout the world of professing Protestant scholars a profound effect was produced. Here, for example, is one of the comments made on Baur's *Paul the Apostle* in a moderate and well-informed British Review of 1860:³

¹ In the *Essays and Reviews* of 1860.

² *The Times*, February 9, 1864, for a judgement reversing that of the Court of Arches and giving the two most "guilty" Essayists and Reviewers the costs of their Appeal. For a time this conclusion seemed another blow to the "faith."

³ *National Review*, April 1860, from the article "The Acts of the Apostles; how far Historical?"

We must not attempt to follow our intrepid critic through all his negations. Did our space permit, we might show how he strives to batter down the whole historic fabric erected with so much care and skill by the artistic hands of the Pauline apologist. We might show how, by the continued application of the same criticism, all those striking and life-like scenes, which for their spirit, their graphic power, their faithfulness to reality have been the admiration of ages—Paul on the road to Damascus . . . Paul wandering among the glorious temples of Athens . . . Paul reasoning in the market-place like another Socrates with those light-minded Greeks . . . that tumultuous assembly in more earnest Ephesus . . . Paul in Jerusalem boldly proclaiming to the exasperated populace his mission to the heathen . . . Paul before the Sanhedrim . . . ; Paul pleading his cause before Felix . . . ; Paul in presence of Festus and Agrippa and Bernice . . . we might show, we say, how at the bidding of the remorseless German, as at the potent waving of some mighty magician's wand, all these scenes, like the baseless fabric of a vision, disappear and fade away into unreality; so that captivated . . . one knows not which to admire more, the imagination which called them into being, and threw around them the vesture of seeming truth, or the rough magic which has conjured them back into nothingness. . . . Of course, it is not to be denied that a certain groundwork of fact lies at the foundation of the scriptural narrative. . . .”

After such a quotation as this it would appear on a short-sighted view almost miraculous that the Bible should have continued virtually undisturbed as the main text-book of religion, morality, and ancient history throughout the schools, colleges, churches, and chapels of the nation. But those who, like the Broad Church supporters of the *National Review*, felt that religious habits, and the interests dependent on them, needed not to fear the new knowledge overmuch but would be well advised to come to terms with it, were wise in their generation. The *National Review* had, in fact, just given a superb example of coming to terms with science in its handling of the issues raised by Darwin's *Origin of Species*:¹

“We cannot help thinking,” it wrote, “that it might have been better if, in this early stage of the inquiry, Mr. Darwin, like Mr. Wallace, had abstained from that explicit avowal of the ultimate conclusions to which it seems to him to lead, which will be sure at once to frighten away many whom he might otherwise have obtained as adherents . . . we shall discard for the present all reference to the question whether (as Mr. Darwin thinks probable) men and tadpoles, birds and fishes, spiders

¹ *National Review*, January 1860, from the article “Darwin on the Origin of Species.”

and snails, insects and oysters, encrinites and sponges, had a common origin in the womb of time, and shall address ourselves only to the arguments used by Mr. Darwin and Mr. Wallace in support of their doctrine of the modification of specific types by natural selection. . . . Why should . . . Mr. Darwin be . . . accused (in terms which it needs no spirit of prophecy to anticipate) of superseding the functions of the Creator, of blotting out His Attributes from the Page of Nature, and of reducing Him to the level of a mere Physical Agency? To our apprehension the Creator did not finish His labours with the creation of the protoplasts of each species; His work is always in progress; the origin and development of each new being that comes into life, is a new manifestation of His creative power; and the question is simply as to the mode in which it has pleased Him to exercise that power; whether, according to common ideas, He has every now and then swept off a greater or smaller proportion of the inhabitants of the globe, and has replaced them by new forms, brought into existence in some mode altogether unknown to us; or whether, as Mr. Darwin maintains, the apparent introduction of new forms has really been brought about by a gradual and successive modification of the old. . . .”

Naturally such quick accommodation to Science was hardly possible to the large majority of the religiously minded, the more so as it implied a readiness to abandon the literal truth of large parts if not the whole of the Bible and Church tradition. If retainable at all under the new hypotheses, how were they to be used otherwise than as illustrations of fallible man's gradual ascent from the darkest superstition and ignorance to slowly increasing measures of Scientific Truth? This was, indeed, what the “advanced party” were virtually prepared for as was proved by the famous *Essays and Reviews* issued late in 1860. This book produced a sensational effect at the time though not in the direction of converting the “religious,” but rather in that of exasperating them to the persecution of the essayists and reviewers. These, in fact, were all in Church or University positions only enterable on subscription of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Communion, and the weakest part of their situation, as High Church, Low Church, and Evangelical Nonconformity all indignantly hurried to show, was the involved casuistry necessary to justify their retention of their posts after they had adopted opinions poles asunder from the literal meaning of the Articles.¹

¹ The printing presses, of course, teemed with indignant pamphlets. The most weighty condemnation of the Essayists will be found in the *Charge delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of St. David's* by its scholar-Bishop, Connop Thirlwall (October 1863).

It was this initial disadvantage of position as against the "orthodox" which ultimately led to so complete a defeat of the "advanced party" in the struggle for the soul of the Church.¹

Another reason for the decisiveness of the "advanced party's" defeat was, perhaps, the unexpectedly complete imperviousness of the great mass of the "religious public" to all that was being done in textual criticism and scientific hypothesis. When so many ministers of religion feel it safest to this day not to think too closely on such matters, when they determine so often that they can do more good to their congregations by using familiar Bible passages, hymns, and creeds to drive home the elementary social duties than by stirring up doubt about the whole Biblical basis on which social institutions have been made to rest, the temptation to do this must obviously have been greater among the very limited number of ministers of religion of the 60's capable of grasping the true weight of "Higher Criticism" and "Scientific Advance." And congregations of the real "religious" have from that day to this remained in scornful and even in wilful ignorance of all that was being effected in deepening scientific understanding of the whole history and character of religious experience. Content to be allowed to continue in the old round of devotional habits and pleasant ceremony so pitilessly satirised in Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*,² bitterly angry, indeed, at the mere thought that clergymen should be sinful and perverted enough to want to disturb it, congregations of the real "religious" were easily turned against the "Higher Critics" by their ecclesiastical opponents. It would appear that the Essayists and Reviewers had

¹ The Secular party's view of the struggle is worth giving at this stage. The *Reasoner* (April 7, 1861) said: "... the essayists and reviewers ... regard themselves as good Christians and Churchmen. ... And such I believe to be the case with the eminent men who, risking prospects of preferment and peace, have spoken out in this volume. ... Indeed, it is just because of the position of the writers that the book has obtained the fame and name it has; for, notwithstanding that one or two of them affect to sneer at Paine and Voltaire, the book itself is but a re-hash, coupled with a compromise, of the difficulties those more eminent men long ago discovered and urged. ... If orthodoxy accepts that plausible compromise and so makes Christianity a little more bearable with the great masses of the people, the work of anti-theology will be checked for, perhaps, a couple of centuries to come. ... However, there is reason for hope ... because orthodoxy has been so silly as to damn itself by damning these essayists and reviewers. ..."

² Butler was already turning over part of his matter for *Erewhon* in 1863 when he was in New Zealand and the exquisite irony of his description of Erewhon's churches (the Musical Banks) was in rough draft by 1865. (Preface to the 1901 edition of *Erewhon*, the first after the two editions of 1872.)

hardly expected such a consummation. Obviously they had not grasped the true reasons for that steady growth of Ritualism which was becoming the greatest internal problem of the Anglican Communion.

But long before the essential powerlessness of the "Higher Critics" to shake conventional religious habits had become plain, while the plebeian Ultra-Radical schools of Holyoake and Bradlaugh were still in joyful expectancy of a breakdown of "organised religion" with radical changes to follow in the ordering of society, the Churches had to sustain some further shocks. The greatest, perhaps, came from the investigations of an Anglican scholar and mathematician, Colenso, since 1853 Bishop of Natal. As a mathematician Colenso had set himself to the investigation of the problem of the numbers given for Israelites, priests, first-born, and so on in the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua. He soon collected an astonishing number of discrepancies not only in this field but in other fields into which he was drawn and, what is more, he published them.¹ His work became at once the target of the hottest attacks from the traditionalists and the centre of revived hopes among the "advanced party." One writer representing these last ventured to speak out thus:²

The mass of Englishmen would be surprised if they knew how tumultuously the spirit of rebellion against religious dogmatism and specially the dogma of biblical infallibility, is seething in the breasts of men who yet shrink from notoriety and the odium which it brings. As a body, the educated world has discarded these notions already. Among the younger generations of students the Bible is freely regarded as open to unfettered criticism. It is only in public and in print that they fear to be candid; among one another they take the question for granted. . . . For severe criticism all men have not the leisure or the inclination; but upon the right to criticise, and the general result of this particular discussion, the writers and thinkers of the nation are in an accordance of which the dogmatists little dream."

Unfortunately for the "younger generation of students" whose revolt from Biblical infallibility was so boldly proclaimed, they were attacking the most strongly rooted sentiments of the great majority of professing Christians, sentiments all too easily mobilis-

¹ The first volume of *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua critically examined* appeared in 1862.

² *National Review*, January 1863, Article "Bishop Colenso on the Pentateuch."

able against them by their clerical opponents.¹ Here are some typical traditionalist positions of the time from a series of "popular sermons" reproduced in book form as *Moses Right and Bishop Colenso Wrong*:²

The author of the work on which in successive lectures I have made some strictures, regards Moses very much as a myth, or of doubtful existence, and if he did exist, that he did not write the Pentateuch; and if he wrote any portion of the Pentateuch, it was a compilation of fables, traditions, stories, drifted along the currents of the world, which he worked up and pieced together after his own fancy, and according to his own taste. The Saviour, however, states (John v. 46, 47) that so intimately connected is belief in the divine legation of Moses, the ancient servant, with faith in Himself, the Lord, that repudiation of such belief is logically followed by a rejected Lord, and a repudiated gospel. . . .

. . . The stones of the monuments, the sarcophagi of the Pharaohs,³ the last resting-places of a thousand mummies, signet-rings from the beds of the rivers, seals from the ruins of ancient Babylon and buried Nineveh, all come up and silently exhibit, substantially, allusions to those very events which the Bishop of Natal says are not true . . . it is just possible that the ark may be found still remaining in the clefts of Ararat . . . the very stones, the broken stones on which the finger of the Almighty engraved in imperishable sculpture the living and lasting laws of morality, of righteousness may yet be found. . . . The Bible was neither meant nor inspired to teach geology, astronomy, or botany. These sciences rest on human observation and induction. But it is alike interesting and useful to notice that Scripture in none of its allusive references to natural phenomena does violence to what the telescope of the astronomer or the hammer of the geologist has disclosed, and that many of the expressions employed by the sacred penmen fully cover—if, indeed, they do not designedly contain—the ripest and most recent conclusions of scientific research. . . .

This kind of thinking it was rather than that of the essayists and reviewers which won the support of the vast majority of pulpits and congregations. This kind of thinking, too, it was which won the support of the great landed and mercantile donors of the 60's whose income was increasing at the "astonishing"

¹ It may be doubted, for example, whether a Thirlwall or even a Wilberforce found such productions as *Moses Right and Bishop Colenso Wrong* really to his taste. Yet its author was a scholar when compared with some of the other pamphleteers who rushed in to defend Moses and confound Colenso.

² By the Rev. John Cumming, D.D., F.R.S.E. (1863). It had a great circulation (cf. *British Miner*, March 7, 1863).

³ The age of archaeology had already begun and defenders of the verbal accuracy of the Bible had commenced "proving" from its discoveries that every incident narrated in the Bible was testified to independently.

⁴ *Moses Right and Bishop Colenso Wrong*, p. 153.

rate of progress which amazed Gladstone at the Exchequer and moved Marx to bitter irony. Church and chapel equipment, indeed, was being increased at a pace almost as "astonishing" as the income of the rich. And this increase permitted a corresponding intensification of all manner of religious "activity" from the steady expansion of the proportion of "free seats" in almost every religious edifice to the taking over of numbers of halls, including even music-halls, for Sunday evening services for the "working classes."¹ Schools and training colleges, too, then often regarded as religious equipment, had been steadily increased though mainly by the Anglican community which drew on the Ecclesiastical Commission's revenues extensively for church building and similar enterprises, and so was more able to turn donors' money into "fruitful" educational channels. These channels were the more "fruitful" in that the money turned into them attracted further supplies from the Committee of Council on Education. By 1868, for example, much public money had been absorbed in furnishing Anglican Training Colleges with buildings and equipment valued at £285,560, and by 1879 these institutions were spending £103,271 per annum, no less than £72,645 of it coming from public grants for teacher-training and only some £17,000 from donors and subscribers.²

Here is a portrait of an "active clergyman" of the day from an Anglican hand:³

Energy, without development of either mind or character, appears to define the type of clergyman which the church revival tends to form. . . . "Active clergyman" is now our favourite form of approbation. The term

¹ Cf. *Life of Samuel Morley*, pp. 144-7. Biographies of Lord Shaftesbury are also revealing.

² Cf. *Whitaker's Almanack*, 1870, p. 167; *Liberator*, May 1881.

³ This is from the "liberal" *National Review* (January 1863, p. 196). It could be surpassed in sarcasm by the High Church *Ecclesiastic* (July 1863, pp. 313-14) on the "active clergyman's" Parish visiting. Here is a sample of "the blunt, bluff, free-and-easy, neighbourly, gossiping, jocose method": "Ah! Mrs. Jinneway, hard at work washing to-day; how's Tom? How's baby? Has Bessy gone to service yet? What! keep a pig, do you? that's good; how much does he cost a week feeding? Billy wasn't at school yesterday! Nor you, by the by, at the Sacrament last Sunday. Don't forget to send for some broth at the vicarage to-morrow," etc., etc. It is easy to see why cathedral and university clerics were half-ashamed of the clergymen who regarded "bustling, gadding about from house to house, talking with the people, especially whipping up men and women to church and children to school" as the main part of their work. They, perhaps, failed to see how "activity" of this kind tended greatly to weaken the obvious plebeian case for Disestablishment and Disendowment.

is an appropriate one: for the merit commended consists in no small degree of bodily locomotion. The active clergyman is much about in his parish doing parochial "work." He builds new schools and looks in upon the schoolmaster daily. He substitutes open seats for pews, of course, and works the fabric of the old church inside and out up to the mark of the established fashion of the day in decoration. . . . He attends public meetings far and wide; there is an "opening" or at least a "reopening" once a month in the diocese. The number of societies to which he belongs is large: he is on the committee of half of them, is secretary of one and treasurer of another. He is not "idle," as he can truly boast; for he has not spent an hour a day in solitary and studious retirement since he was ordained. . . .

That against all this mobilisation of Christian wealth and "activity" during the 60's plebeian infidelity should still be felt to be holding its own and even gaining ground with large sections of the urban "working classes" was principally the work of one man, Charles Bradlaugh. Of course, he was helped by the very widespread operative dislike of churchgoing and churchgoers, and the very widespread operative conviction that parsons were hypocrites and organised religion an upper- and middle-class device to strengthen the existing order of society. Then, too, there were actually some elements of organisation among the "infidels," thanks to the patient labours of Holyoake in lecturing and issuing the weekly *Reasoner*. In many urban industrial centres¹ Secular Societies met, sometimes in institutions inherited from the Owenites, sometimes in hired rooms, sometimes even in coffee-houses and public-houses, to hear Sunday lecturers refuting the Bible and retailing the latest views of the *Reasoner*. Among such lecturers Bradlaugh had stood out almost from his first address, and by 1860, though only twenty-seven, he was already sufficiently prominent to be invited to edit jointly with that well-

¹ The *Reasoner*, January 13, 1861, contains announcements of lectures and discussions at the following London centres: The City Forum, Red Cross Street; the Clerkenwell Discussion Hall; the East City Discussion Hall (46 and 47, Beech Street, Barbican); The General Secular Benevolent Society, 93, Leather Lane; the Hall of Science, City Road; the Institution, Cleveland Street; the South London Secular Society, Blackfriars Road; the South Place Chapel, Finsbury.

The *Reasoner*, March 31st, contains similar announcements for Birmingham, Bolton, Bradford, Coventry, Hull, Hyde, Leicester, Norwich, Nottingham, Royton, Sunderland, Newcastle, Northampton, and Sheffield.

These announcements were far from being all-embracing. Such a previous number of the *Reasoner*, for example as that of January 13, 1860, shows Leeds, Halifax, Glasgow, and Bramley to have had their Secularist organisations, the Leeds organisation, indeed, employing its own lecturer.

known veteran of the platform, Joseph Barker,¹ a new Free Thought Ultra-Radical paper, the *National Reformer*. Its scanty initial capital was supplied, mainly in small subscriptions, by admirers of the two editors in the northern manufacturing towns, especially Sheffield.²

The two editors could not continue long together. Joseph Barker, though now a power in the "infidel" camp, had once been a Christian minister and, indeed, the most virulent and dangerous assailant of the "immorality" of the Owenites' attempt of 1838-9 to foster revised ideas of the institution of marriage. He might since have become a convert to the views of Paine and Owen on "organised religion" and the Bible, but he was still most eminently respectable in his views on sex and the family. When, therefore, he found his co-editor, Bradlaugh, giving a welcome to the then "notorious" *Elements of Social Science*, a book remarkable for that day in treating and explaining sexual activity as a mere natural function, an embittered dispute began. What is stranger, the *National Reformer's* shareholders decided when the dispute had gone too far for reconciliation that they would retain Bradlaugh despite Barker's great reputation in Britain and America.³

It will be useful to give a view of the quarrel through the eyes of a well-placed spectator, the minister of South Place Chapel, the Sunday resort of many of London's Ultra-Radical artisans and shopkeepers who wanted something like the Christian order of service combined with the most "advanced" religious views short of Atheism. As a "minister of religion," Dr. Perfitt almost inevitably took Barker's side, but his incidental comments on the

¹ The South Place organ, the *Pathfinder*, gave the following account on November 16, 1861, after the two editors had quarrelled: "At the present moment the two giants of the ultra-freethought platform are Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and Mr. Joseph Barker. The former is comparatively a young man, but remarkable alike for the intensity of the hatred which he bears to the Bible, and the earnestness with which he hunts down those of its defenders with whom he is publicly brought into . . . contact. But unfortunately he has not sufficiently mastered the questions he has undertaken to discuss—he is unconscious of the difficulties which beset the better-read and deeper thinker. . . . Mr. Barker is a man of another stamp; he is mature as a thinker, logical as a debater, earnest, persevering, dauntless, powerful in argument. . . . There is not in England a man who is more competent to debate, upon a public platform, the Biblical and theological questions of the age. . . ."

² *National Reformer*, June 9, 16, and 23, 1860, for the subscribers, £1,000 had been aimed at, but the paper was apparently begun on less than £300. On June 19, 1861, the weekly sale was 5,500 2d. copies.

³ The names of Dr. Channing and Theodore Parker will, perhaps, convey how theologically "advanced" some of America's leading pulpits had been for some time.

constitution of the Ultra-Radical camp most hostile to the whole existing social order are significant and worth giving:¹

“In the ranks of Secularism,” wrote Dr. Perfitt, “there are three parties, two of which are fundamentally opposed to each other. The first is composed of men who make unceasing war upon the entire circle of theological systems . . . but uphold Morality. . . . These men are all on the side of Mr. Barker. . . . The opposite class to these is composed of low-browed, coarse, uneducated, and sensual men. . . . Their tastes are as low as their brows. Prompted to their unbelief by a kind of brute instinct, they are most violent in their denunciations of the Bible and Priestcraft, not because of having risen above them, but because of their incapacity to understand the nature of what they curse. . . . These men are all with Mr. Bradlaugh, although in spirit and moral life he is not with them.

“Below these two classes there is yet a third, composed of those who are prepared to excuse all deficiencies in those who belong to the Society. They are neither given to vice nor desirous of having it advocated, but they are so wedded to Secularism, that they slavishly tolerate movements which their conscience cannot approve; and so ardent in their hatred to modern religious theories that they cannot pardon the man who publicly questions the propriety of any Secularist’s conduct. . . .”

It was this Ultra-Radical “infidel” camp which supplied the most determined Hyde Park demonstrators of the 1866–8 Reform agitation, which attempted the “Republican movement” of 1870–3 under Bradlaugh’s leadership and which manned the Radical clubs of the 80’s where British Socialism was born. But possessing no avowed Parliamentary representative until Bradlaugh entered the House of Commons, it could only have attempted a successful political initiative in revolutionary circumstances, circumstances like those that were found in Paris in 1848 and 1871. British politics, of course, never furnished these, so that in 1868 Ultra-Radical “infidels” had no completer expression of their views open to them than rallying to the attack of Parliamentary Radicalism upon State-Church machinery in Ireland and the State-Church’s grip upon virtually every desirable educational endowment or income in England.

It was the Dissenting Liberationists who supplied the “respectability,” the Parliamentary position, and the finance which even before the Dissolution of 1868 had made immediate “practical politics” of Irish Disestablishment and Abolition of the

¹ The *Pathfinder*, November 16, 1861.

Anglican University Tests.¹ Immense energy, considerable expenditure, and constant vigilance had naturally been necessary in the Liberation Society. One instance must suffice for all. The Dissenters had derived great advantages from the figures of a Religious Census of 1851² which apparently proved their favourite points: that Nonconformists now outnumbered Churchmen, that they were increasing chapel accommodation much faster than Churchmen were increasing church accommodation, that they were doing this entirely from private resources while Churchmen largely used what were in effect public funds in the shape of tithes and the revenues in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Every one of these points had its angles of appeal to the "democracy," and, indeed, the Church Rates struggle, which was not victoriously concluded until the 1868 Session, was often fought out on the basis of an alliance of Dissenters and "working classes" against the "privileged Church." All over the country, in fact, the alliance continued, even after the Church Rates controversy was over, for such purposes as contesting School Board and parish elections,³ and petitioning against Tithes and Church Establishments or in support of Deceased Wife's Sister Marriages and Free Education.

But in 1860 the Dissenters and their Liberation Society thought they detected a danger to the immense propaganda advantages they had derived from the Census figures of 1851. Instead of repeating the calculation of denominational strengths from the figures of actual Sunday worshippers supplied by the chapels and churches for the given Census Sunday, the Government proposed to meet the views of the Church by asking householders to fill in denominational particulars for their households as they filled in all other details. Against this proposal, deliberately calculated it was claimed to give the Church an appearance of greater strength

¹ Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) gives an interesting if somewhat hostile view of this stage of Liberationism.

² This is the famous *Religious Worship in England and Wales*, abridged from the *Official Report made by Horace Mann* (1854). Churchmen contested both the Census methods and Mann's conclusions. Moreover, Wesleyan Methodism, the strongest Nonconformist sect, could hardly be counted as Dissenting in an anti-Church or Liberationist sense.

³ As in some Norfolk instances of the 70's where Primitive Methodism and Agricultural Unions were growing together. It should be remembered that Churchwardens and Overseers still exercised important lay functions which village Radicals were anxious to wrest from the "parson's party" when the law gave an opening. Chapter Nine of Marion Springall's *Labouring Life in Norfolk Villages* has some valuable evidence.

than it possessed,¹ a great and ultimately successful Dissenting agitation was raised,² and Palmerston and his Home Secretary, who had begun by showing fight, finally abandoned both types of religious census except in the case of Ireland. There the Dissenters knew that any kind of religious census would yield results invaluable for their Disestablishment campaigns.³

An important light will be thrown on much of the politics of the 60's, 70's, and 80's if the arguments used by the Dissenters against the census proposal of 1860 are examined. They argued firstly that actual attendance at a place of worship—the Religious Census basis of 1851—was the only reliable indication of denominational adhesion. A mere written entry on a Census Form, sure to be seen by many eyes and, perhaps, the householder might suspect, by those of the parson, the landlord, and the "gentry" generally, would, in effect, tempt many who never went to any place of worship and some who went to chapels to enter themselves as Churchpeople. As Dissenters constantly pointed out in those angry discussions between them and Churchmen when Dissenting use of the 1851 figures was met by Church taunts of their untrustworthiness,⁴ entrants to prisons, workhouses, and the Army all tended to claim Churchmanship by very large

¹ *The History of the Free Churches of England 1688-1891* (Skeats and Miall), p. 560, gives the Dissenter's view that there was almost a Church plot:

"Before the session of 1860 expired," it writes, "her Majesty's Ministers prepared a surprise for Nonconformists. Lord Palmerston, who ought to have known better, consented at the instigation of his Episcopal friends, to a scheme requiring, under a penalty, a statement of 'religious profession' from the population in connection with the forthcoming Census, in lieu of returns of attendance at public worship, as made ten years before, which were now found to be impracticable in consequence of Church opposition. The Bill for that purpose was brought in during the month of May—with the promised support of Mr. Disraeli. . . ."

² *Ibid.*, pp. 561-3: "There was instant action on the other side. . . . A large and influential committee was formed, composed of some forty M.P.s and other gentlemen of mark, who communicated with the friends of religious freedom throughout the country. A large deputation of members, headed by Mr. Bright and Mr. Baxter, waited upon the Home Secretary, who had evidently been deceived. . . . A great meeting . . . was held in the Freemasons' Hall, and similar meetings were held throughout the country . . . more than a hundred members sent a memorial to Lord Palmerston. . . . When the Bill went into committee on July 11th a shoal of petitions was presented. . . ." etc. *The British Almanac*, 1861, p. 219, gives the total number of petitions as 939.

³ In point of fact the Dissenters allowed the Irish Census provisions to pass unopposed though they provided for a religious enumeration on the basis of verbal profession instead of actual attendance at a place of worship.

⁴ The Church party hesitated not to hint most broadly that some at least of the figures supplied by the chapels to the census officers of 1851 had been exaggerated.

majorities though it was clear that religious observance had never been their strong point. Was it not plain that most convicts, paupers, and soldiers thought that special favours and benefits might be derivable from a claim to membership of the "Established Church"? And was not the same true of practically the whole English countryside where the parson was still in virtually unchecked control of the ancient charitable and educational endowments intended for the whole nation but now "monopolised" by a single sect? Was it not true, moreover, that the most brutal and most criminal classes in the country hated the piety and assiduous chapelgoing of the Dissenters so bitterly as to affect adherence to the Church by contrast?

The acrimonious debates between Church and Dissent tended to grow steadily hotter during the 60's. If Dissent never forgot to press home all its favourite points from the "scandal" of lay patronage and lay ownership of tithes to the taunt that it was only the golden link of State-sanctioned revenues that kept Romanising High Churchmen, sceptical Essayists and Reviewers, and Evangelical Low Churchmen together in the most quarrelsome and faction-ridden State Church in the world, Churchmen, too, had their sharp retorts. Thanks to wise and ancient arrangements, it was claimed, the Church could allow the working classes free worship and free religious guidance. Dissent, on the other hand, was "essentially *mercantile* in spirit—it only preaches the Gospel to those who can pay for it.¹ To the major portion of the community²—to the teeming millions who are being 'destroyed'—destroyed in the darkest and most terrific sense of the word, 'for lack of knowledge,' the spiritual traffickers of this mercenary and hireling system carry no evangel—no celestial mission of mercy—no 'good tidings of great joy.' They leave the lower strata of society to rot in their vice and squalor. They leave the rural populations to their hereditary paganism. They leave the poor to their pauperism and ignorance. . . ."

The lack of real education among so many of the Dissenting Ministers³ made another favourite point with their Church oppo-

¹ *The Church as Established in its Relations with Dissent*, by the Rev. Dr. Clark (1866), p. 98.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 100-1.

³ Cf. Rev. Dr. Clark's *The Church as Established in its Relations with Dissent*, p. 81: "Nearly a *fourth* of the whole body of Congregationalist ministers have received no ministerial training whatsoever. These men are in most cases lamentably and shamefully ignorant. Their glibness of tongue in the absence of almost every qualification having been taken . . . as an evidence of their

nents, and so did the Ministers' frequent subservience to congregations which paid them and might dismiss them.¹ And against the political leaders of Dissent in the Liberation struggle, charges amounting to quasi-perjury could be made so long as the official Oaths and Declarations imposed by the Tories on Dissenters in 1828 and on Catholics in 1829 were retained. These Oaths and Declarations were, in point of fact, being modified between 1866 and 1868 as part almost of the price which the Tory party was paying for its minority Government to be allowed to stay in office. But until these modifications were complete, bitter charges of bad faith were possible against all who were endeavouring to diminish a tittle of the privileges of the Established Church. Here may be given one example of this controversial method:²

"I, A.B., do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess, testify, and declare, upon the true faith of a Christian, that I will never exercise any power, authority, or influence which I may possess by virtue of the office of . . . to injure or weaken the Protestant Church, as it is by law established in England, or to disturb the said Church or the Bishops, and the Clergy of the said Church, in the possession of any rights or privileges to which such Church, or the said Bishops and Clergy are, or may be, by law entitled."

This, be it remembered, is the Declaration which every mayor, alder-

'call' to the ministry, they have assumed forthwith the solemn duties of that high and sacred office. One has gone directly . . . from watchmaking to sermon-making; a second from painting to preaching; a third from the building up of the material to the building up of the spiritual edifice; a fourth from 'cobbling' to divinity. . . . Raw from their handicrafts, they are precipitated upon a vocation which demands a well-informed, well-disciplined, and well-balanced intellect, a thorough knowledge of theology—a critical acquaintance with the original languages of the Holy Scriptures as well as the languages of their principal versions—and some considerable practice in the application of exegetical principles, not to name other essential elements of a sound gentlemanly education. . . .

"But, not only are the ministers of the Congregational denomination, to the extent of nearly *one fourth* of the total number, men who . . . have received *no theological or clerical training whatsoever*; but also upwards of *one-fifth* of the remaining portion are men, whose training, if such it may be called, has been of a decidedly inferior . . . character. The old 'academical' and 'domestic' system was most miserably inadequate. . . . It was not reasonable to expect . . . that men, whose only preparation for the ministry was obtained at Pickering, Rowell, Tarvey, Barnet, Blackburn, Idle, Wymondley, Hoxton, Yeovil, or Penywaun, should be other than slenderly equipped. . . ."

¹ Cf. Rev. Dr. Clark's *The Church as Established in its Relations with Dissent*, p. 190: "But to tremble and fear before grocers and haberdashers, whom the popular suffrage has made the purse-bearers and despots of the flock—to cower for the crumbs which fall from my 'Lord-Deacon's' table is an ignominy, if possible, more scorching to the intellect, and more crushing to the heart than that of the negro or the galley-slave."

² Rev. Dr. Clark, *op. cit.*, pp. 270-1.

man, magistrate, and crown officer of whatever rank, who subscribes to the Liberation Society, has made solemnly "in the presence of God" and "upon the faith of a Christian." And how are they keeping this . . . ? How are such gentlemen keeping it as the Right Honourable T. M. Gibson, M.P., Mr. Stansfield, late Junior Lord of the Admiralty, Mr. Charles Gilpin, late secretary to the Poor Law Commissioners, all of whom are members of Mr. Edward Miall's anti-state-church, and, we may add, anti-constitutionalist Association?

But more, Romanists, Quakers, and Separatists, or Dissenters generally, are engaged in this vile conspiracy against the Church, the Crown, the Aristocracy. And yet, note what are the Oaths and Affirmations which must have been made, ere such men as Mr. Hadfield, Sir M. Peto, Mr. Baines, Mr. Dodson, Mr. Bouverie, Sir Frank Crossley, Mr. Dillwyn, Sir J. Trelawney, Mr. Bright, and the whole Liberation armada with its Irish, Chartist, and Infidel brigades, could have marshalled its forces on the arena of the House of Commons. . . .

It becomes plain why the Parliament elected in November 1868 was to see such bitter controversy raging for and against the curtailment of the privileged position of the Established Church.¹

¹ To match the angry Church view quoted above, it were well, perhaps, to quote a strong anti-Church view. Here is the angry John Morley in 1873, after the Church had been given in the Education Act of 1870 what he considered new and unjustifiable privileges:

"Our people have an instinctive distrust of clerical influence—a distrust which often takes vulgar and even unjust forms, but which is at bottom one of the soundest and shrewdest of all our national impulses. What respect can we have in a time of active scientific inquiry for men who at the age of three-and-twenty bind themselves in heavy penalties never again to use their minds freely as long as they live? . . .

"It has been contended that dissenting ministers are as narrow, as hostile to science. . . . I question the fact, but what if they are? However narrow they may be, at least they do not impudently ask the State to give them my money for teaching their opinions. . . .

"A little shiver of intellectual liberalism in some of the more courageous of the Anglican clergy should not blind us to the intensely obscurantist character of the rank and file. . . . It is no answer to our contention of the retrograde direction of the course that the Liberal leaders have pursued to repeat the worn assertions that the English clergy are not as other clergy. . . . It is not merely a decaying order of ideas that the ministers of the State Church exist to advocate. They represent the forces of social, no less than of intellectual reaction" (*The Struggle for National Education*, pp. 60 sqq.).

POLITICAL "ADVANCE" IN 1869 AND 1870

"When the Irish church question is out of the way, we shall find all Ireland, north and south alike, united in demanding something on the land question much broader than anything hitherto offered or proposed in compensation bills. If the question is to go on without any real remedy for the grievance, the condition of Ireland in this particular will become worse, and measures far beyond anything I now contemplate will be necessary. . . . I have studied the Irish land question from a point of view almost inaccessible to the rest of your colleagues, and from which possibly even you have not had the opportunity of regarding it. . . ."

Bright to Gladstone, May 21, 1869, pressing an Irish Land Bill. (From MORLEY'S "Gladstone," i, 686.)

"Horrible scenes had been occurring in Ireland. . . . Landlords were shot down like game, respectable farmers were beaten to death with sticks by masked men; bailiffs were shot in the back; policemen were stabbed; . . . households were blown up, and firearms surreptitiously obtained. All this time the Government would not move."

DISRAELI on the Address, February 1870.

"Years ago I hoped the time would come when we could count among our members, alongside the merchant and manufacturer, the working man and the artisan. I should delight to see Mr. Odger and some other Mr. Odgers in the next Parliament. . . ."

W. E. FORSTER on Odger's working-class candidature, January 1870. (From F. W. SOUTTER'S "Recollections of a Labour Pioneer," p. 46.)

"If you see Mr. Forster you may safely tell him that he has succeeded in raising the whole of the Dissenters against him, and if he thinks little of our power we will teach him his mistake."

Joseph Chamberlain to G. Dixon, M.P., March 3, 1870. (From J. L. GARVIN'S "Chamberlain," i, 110.)

THE Parliament issuing from the elections of November 1868 was the most Radical which England had known since 1832. The following list of the figures of votes cast has its significance, and the significance is not diminished when it is remembered that vote by ballot did not yet exist and that county division enfranchisement lagged very far behind that of the boroughs:¹

	<i>Liberal Votes</i>	<i>Conservative Votes</i>	<i>Liberal Majority</i>
England and Wales	1,231,457	824,056	407,393
Scotland ..	123,410	23,391	100,019
Ireland ..	53,379	36,083	17,297

A Tory electioneering comment on these results by Disraeli's Foreign Secretary, the Earl of Malmesbury, has its value. "The counties have behaved splendidly," he wrote, "and *The Times* of course says that they must be reformed, grudging us our miserable minority of 272."² The majority which would have voted "No Confidence" in Disraeli had he not anticipated the verdict by resigning numbered not much less than 390. The majority, too, had a very strong "advanced Liberal" wing whose vehemence Gladstone hoped in some measure to control by making so unparalleled an appointment to the Cabinet as that of John Bright, the unflagging assailant at every opportunity of the Church and the Peerage.³ Yet only in 1865, when Russell had formed his last Cabinet, House of Lords Whiggery had been able to veto his appointment without apparently needing to fear the consequences. Such a course was plainly possible no longer.

The appointment of strong Radicals like A. S. Ayrton, W. E.

¹ Morley's *Gladstone*, ed. 1908, i, 668.

² Malmesbury's *Memoirs* under November 28th.

³ Irving's *Annals* has under December 5, 1868, a note showing that there was incredulity to the last. Reporting Gladstone's arrival at Windsor with his Cabinet list it adds: "What had hitherto been a vague rumour concerning the presence of Mr. Bright in the Cabinet now obtains general credence." That the introduction of Bright to the Queen and the royal circle was not without its anxieties to some of his colleagues may be perceived from Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, the urbane Peer who undertook to guide Bright through his first appearance at Osborne. Yet Bright's support was prized so highly by Gladstone that "advanced Liberals" regretted that he had not taken his opportunity to force a younger Radical into the Cabinet beside him—Forster or Stansfeld for preference (The Hammonds' *James Stansfeld*, p. 92).

Political "Advance" in 1869 and 1870

Forster,¹ James Stansfeld,² G. O. Trevelyan,³ and A. J. Otway to non-Cabinet posts of importance also had its meaning. Gladstone had witnessed not merely the Reform League agitation of the boroughs, but such other striking Radical phenomena as the successful Welsh revolts against landlord-politics led by the Rev. Henry Richard, M.P.,⁴ and inspired jointly by Disestablishment hopes and incipient Welsh Nationalism.⁵ Nor would the views of men like the Radical hosiery millionaire, Samuel Morley, M.P.,⁶ go for nothing. Samuel Morley seems to have spent more than anyone else in the country on the 1868 elections, he had just made it possible for the *Daily News* to reduce its price to 1d., and to his unflinching support Gladstone was to owe much of his ability to control "advanced Liberalism" during the ensuing years. In Morley Gladstone had a measure of the allies whose views would have to be met by the Whigs and Peelites if "Liberal unity" was to be maintained. When he distributed three of his five Secretaryships of State among those singularly influential Peers, Lords Clarendon and Granville and the Duke of Argyll, when he gave other Cabinet posts besides to Lord Kimberley, Earl de Grey,⁷ and the Marquis of Hartington, heir to the mighty ducal house of Devonshire, Gladstone was taking measures not only to moderate the "democracy," but to secure the strongest possible support in the House of Lords for "advanced" policies. The "Lansdowne

¹ See T. W. Reid's *Life* for his political past.

² See the Hammonds' *Life* for this interesting politician.

³ See Professor Trevelyan's fine biographical tribute to his father, who had been since 1865 M.P. for Tynemouth.

⁴ Elected M.P. for Merthyr in 1868 despite the serious handicap of being a "mere preacher" and his obvious lack of wealth. See C. S. Miall's *Life*, p. 150, for his striking place well at the head of the poll against two strong candidates. On July 8, 1869, he was the spokesman of the Welsh Liberal M.P.s in a motion condemning the conduct of the landlords who had served two hundred notices of ejectment upon tenants who had voted Liberal.

⁵ At Merthyr, for example, Richard had made much of his having been born a Welshman and knowing the Welsh language and literature. In the counties, Disestablishment would offer farmers, especially Dissenting farmers, freedom from tithes.

⁶ M.P., Bristol, though as Hodder's *Life* shows he committed himself before his election in November 1868 to some departure from the Disendowment if not the Disestablishment principles of the Liberation Society, and so caused much perturbation in their camp. Canon Girdlestone, a well-known "advanced Liberal" parson and "friend of the agricultural labourer," had had some influence on Mr. Morley's decision to announce this change of view which made him still more useful to Mr. Gladstone.

⁷ Earl de Grey was the Lord Goderich who had displayed marked Christian Socialist sympathies in the early 50's. He is best known by his later title of Marquis of Ripon. There is a biography by Lucien Wolf.

influence," too, which had exercised such a potent influence on House of Lords Whiggery for generations, was annexed by the offer of a Junior Lordship of the Treasury to the somewhat wild young man¹ who occupied the place of his notable grandfather. The Lansdowne estates were among the most important in Ireland, and Irish Church and Land legislation was certain to be the most controversial business of the new Parliament. Was not Fenianism still very active?

Before Gladstone introduced his famous Bill for Irish Church Disestablishment on March 1, 1869, some of the lines on which his Government proposed to work were already clear. Forster, who was in charge of educational matters in the Commons, had brought in a measure which set up Endowed Schools Commissioners competent to turn to better use the three thousand and more school endowments over fifty years old and not dealt with under another scheme for modernising the teaching and organisation of the great "Public Schools." Experience was to prove that Forster's Commissioners would not admit Anglican claims to monopolise the teaching posts and the "religious and moral instruction" of a school in those numerous cases in which a pious donor of the past had put his institution under the supervision of an ecclesiastic or had asked the whole school to worship together, perhaps in the parish church, on certain days in the year.² The best answer given to such claims was that which was once more made in the debates of 1869 on yet another Bill to abolish the Anglican University Tests and introduced by Gladstone's Solicitor-General. If the intention of the founders was to be the principal criterion of the limits of permissible change, then all too frequently Catholics and not Anglicans should have been in charge of ancient endowments.

¹ See Lord Newton's *Life*.

² By 1873 Church opposition to the Commissioners was rising high enough to allow the May number of the *National Church*, the organ of the Church Defence Institution, to print the following paragraph:

"An important committee, to watch the proceedings of the Endowed Schools Commissioners . . . was formed at the late conference held on the subject at Willis's Rooms. This Committee has been sitting regularly since that time, and has had before it many important cases. All governors and teachers of schools who are aggrieved . . . should at once put themselves in communication with the committee. It consists of the Marquess of Salisbury, K.G. (Chairman), Lord Kesteven, Lord Wharnccliffe. . . ." Churchmen were already hoping to reverse the current which had ended or was menacing their doctrinal control of the 572 Grammar Schools, numerous "Free School" endowments, and some non-educational charities made convertible to education in 1869.

Political "Advance" in 1869 and 1870

Gladstone's introduction of the Irish Disestablishment Bill on March 1, 1869, was a remarkable event. Estimating Irish Church property to have a capitalised value of 16 millions, Gladstone offered the Disestablished Episcopal Church of the future, incumbents' "life interest" equivalents of £4,900,000, and the retention of the whole of the cathedrals, parish churches, and parsonage houses. In return for this and the offer of an additional £900,000 for "lay compensations," Gladstone first desired leave to take £1,100,000 of Church property in order to effect the agreed cancellation of the Maynooth commitments to Catholics and the *Regium Donum* commitments to Presbyterians, commitments incurred in the past in order to make Episcopalian privileges less odious. This would still leave an immense capital available for the common good of the whole Irish population, and characteristically Gladstone proposed to devote the annual yield to such "pious uses" as aid to the blind, the provision and maintenance of lunatic asylums, and similar supplementations of the very meagre charities of the Irish Poor Law. Taken all in all, the scheme was moderate enough to lead Disraeli to ask for a three weeks' interval before the Second Reading was taken¹ and meanwhile to refrain from opposition. It was plain that the interval would be spent by the Tory leaders in earnest consultation as to whether it might be possible to prepare in the Commons for the Bill's total rejection in the Lords or whether the utmost that could be hoped for was a strong forcing-up of the Episcopalian "compensations."

Pending the Conservative decision² the country heard Radicals criticising the very large payments which had been necessitated by the first of Disraeli's Imperial adventures, the Abyssinian expedition against Theodore,³ and loudly approving the considerable reduction of the Army and Navy Estimates with which the Gladstone Government had opened its spending programme.⁴ On the ballot, too, the Prime Minister asked for the withdrawal of a Radical motion in a fashion which virtually committed his

¹ *Hansard*, March 1st. Disraeli was conceded a Second Reading debate to commence on March 18th.

² *Ibid.*, March 4th (Mr. Gathorne Hardy), shows that it had been already determined to resist the Second Reading strongly.

³ *Ibid.* (Mr. White and others).

⁴ *Ibid.*, March 8th, for Mr. Childers' claim that he had reduced the Naval Estimates by £1,300,000 and March 11th for Cardwell's that he had reduced the Army Estimates by £1,280,000.

Government to a Ministerial Ballot Bill in the future.¹ After long decades of fruitless Radical effort this was a success worth having. Yet the division on Professor Fawcett's Bill to free Parliamentary candidates from the polling-booth costs which in 1832 had been so meanly thrust upon them instead of upon the rates had been a losing one at 165 against 168.² There was still apparently a majority even in the Commons desirous of keeping Parliament closed to those who could not afford the swollen election expenses of the time, expenses large enough in all conscience without being increased by polling-booth costs.

On March 18th the course of the Session was vitally affected by the Tory decision, manifested in Disraeli's opposition to the Second Reading of the Irish Church Bill, to make the stiffest possible resistance to Irish Disestablishment. Indeed, it was only on May 31st that the Third Reading was carried through the Commons by 361 against 247, and it was June 18th before the Lords, by way of preparation for the demand of further financial concessions for the Irish Episcopalians, allowed the Bill a Second Reading by 179 against 146. They had been aided to this decision by bitterly criticised "menaces" from Bright,³ and Bright added to his sins still further during the July days when the Lords' amendments were provoking a dangerous controversy with the Commons.⁴ The Lords had begun by amendments which would have appropriated, perhaps, thirteen of the sixteen Church millions to the Episcopalians, and Bright had retorted by using language which was understood as threatening a Dissolution and a General Election. Such an election, waged in a bitter Commons versus Lords atmosphere, would certainly have suited Bright who was impatient of the Whig restraints imposed upon him in a Cabinet wherein he was waging a difficult battle for an "advanced" Irish

¹ *Hansard*, March 16th, for proceedings on the motion of Mr. Bright's brother-in-law, Mr. Leatham, M.P. for Huddersfield. ² *Ibid.*, March 3rd.

³ Trevelyan's *Life of John Bright*, p. 403, quotes this passage from Bright's public letter of June 9th: "The Lords are not very wise, but there is sometimes profit to the people even in their unwisdom. If they should delay the passing of the Irish Church Bill for three months, they will stimulate discussion on important questions which, but for their infatuation, might have slumbered for many years. . . . In harmony with the nation they may go on for a long time, but throwing themselves athwart its course, they may meet with accidents not pleasant for them to think of."

⁴ On July 15th Gladstone divided the Commons at 346 against 222 for disagreeing with the Lords' amendments. Next day in the course of discussions on Gladstone's counter-offers, Disraeli "complained strongly of Mr. Bright's threat of a dissolution which Mr. Gladstone repudiated."

Political "Advance" in 1869 and 1870

Land Bill as the main Government measure for 1870. But the Tory leaders in the Lords finally shrank from a dangerous contest,¹ and Gladstone proved willing on July 23rd to persuade the Commons to the minimum concession necessary to avoid a constitutional deadlock which would have raised the fundamental questions that he wished to avoid.

Experience was to prove that the Irish Episcopalians had obtained their "compensations" on very advantageous terms. Indeed, the impossibility of "compensating" English Episcopalians in parallel measure was eventually to prove one obstacle the more to the Dissenting and Radical "Disestablishmentarians" who under Miall and Richard were in stronger force in the Parliament of 1868-74 than ever before. But the Disestablishers were very far yet from any real hopes of ending the connexion between Church and State in England as it had been ended in Ireland. When the Lords hesitated not to destroy still another University Tests Bill threatening to loosen the Anglican grip on the huge endowments of Oxford and Cambridge,² when they deemed it safe to kill yet another Marriages Bill,³ intended to free Dissenters from the Anglican prohibition of Deceased Wife's Sister Marriages, Disestablishment in England was plainly far off. Only if the ecclesiastical stresses between the "Puseyite" and Evangelical clergy had become great enough to produce serious schism, would the immediate prospects of Disestablishment have improved.

It is interesting to turn to the other "movements" which Radicalism was meanwhile breeding in the country. It was in the course of 1869 that J. S. Mill resolved to devote himself and his immense prestige to the foundation of a Land Tenure Reform Association whose agitation of 1870-3 served to make the "Land Question," and especially the taxation of unearned increment, a tolerably real one.⁴ Then "Labour Representation" was tending

¹ Monypenny and Buckle's *Life of Disraeli*, v, 104 sqq., shows how hesitant Tory leadership had been in view of the risks of uncompromising opposition. It was back-bencher Tory Peers who forced them to stage a "grim struggle."

² *Hansard*, July 19th.

³ *Ibid.*, April 21st, for the Second Reading debate in the Commons which ended in a triumphant Division of 243 against 144.

⁴ Howard Evans, *Radical Fights of Forty Years*, pp. 32-5. Evans, who organised meetings for the Association at Oldham, Preston, Huddersfield, Bradford, Wolverhampton, Norwich, Ipswich, Bristol, Gloucester, Salisbury, Banbury, and elsewhere, recounts that "some of the working-class leaders with whom Mill was in touch favoured the Nationalisation of the Land. Mill was not prepared to go so far, but, as a compromise, he proposed that the unearned increment should be taxed."

to make an increasing appeal to Trade Unionists as the likelihood of obtaining a satisfactory revision of the "Labour Laws" from the Gladstone Government diminished, and certainly George Odger's campaign for Southwark created a very considerable stir in politics between October 1869 and February 1870.¹ But both the "Land Question" and that of "Labour Representation" were far outdistanced in immediate political importance by the "Education Question" as propounded by a Radical Education League, rooted in Birmingham and led by Mr. George Dixon, M.P., as Chairman, Joseph Chamberlain as Vice-Chairman, and Jesse Collings as Secretary.² A great advance in the public provision of elementary education was recognised as inevitable, and the Education League pressed that the opportunity should be taken to provide "unsectarian" education free in the public elementary schools which would need to be organised throughout the country. When education was provided free, it was argued, it would be possible to make regular attendance compulsory, and when the costs were laid upon ratepayers of varying creeds and beliefs, it was but common justice to demand that the education should be "unsectarian." The Birmingham League, indeed, expected that the vast apparatus of Church of England "National Schools" might quickly come to have altogether less claim to Exchequer support after rate-provided "unsectarian" schools should have begun to rise in every district offering free education without regard to sectarian advantage. Churchmen and Conservatives were soon sufficiently worried by the Education League's energetic propaganda to erect over against it their own National Education Union "to counteract the work of the Birmingham League and others advocating secular training only, and the secularisation of our national institutions."³

On February 17, 1870, W. E. Forster, hitherto one of the most trusted Radical representatives in the Government,⁴ intro-

¹ Cf. *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, by F. W. Soutter. The *Daily Telegraph* raised £480 for Odger's expenses, M.P.s like Professor Fawcett and Sir Charles Dilke gave personal aid despite a declaration from Bright on the unwisdom of the working classes committing themselves to class representation, and the final result was Col. Beresford (Tory) 4,686, George Odger (Radical) 4,382, and Sir Sydney Waterlow (Liberal) 2,867. It was a result which encouraged the formation of the "Labour Representation League" announced in the *Beehive* of March 26th.

² J. L. Garvin's *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, i, 92 sqq.

³ H. Holman, *English National Education*, p. 178. Catholic and Wesleyan support was also won against the "secularists."

⁴ Radicals had tried to force him into the Cabinet alongside Bright.

Political "Advance" in 1869 and 1870

duced a fateful Education Bill against which the Birmingham-led National Education League quickly resolved to fight a strong battle.¹ The Bill did, it is true, make provision for erecting public elementary schools, but only where "voluntary agency" should be found still to have left some gaps despite the special building subventions offered it during a preliminary year of waiting.

There were other strong Radical objections to the Bill besides this abandonment of further educational territory to subventioned Church agencies.² Especially did Radicals contest the obligation laid upon the new publicly owned schools of charging fees on a scale expected to make them yield a third of the total cost. A specious case could, of course, be made out against free education. It could be argued according to the best moral maxims of 1870 that it was wrong to allow working-class parents to slip off their "parental responsibility" to find part at least of the cost of their children's education, and a worrying picture could be drawn of what would happen if "middle-class" parents demanded similar treatment and the provision of free "middle-class education" for their progeny.³ But even according to the middle-class standards of 1870 this case tended to look much less specious when the plight of an underpaid farm labourer with three or four children and a shilling of "school pence" to find per week was brought to mind.⁴ Thus though the talk of "parental responsibility" was calculated to be of weight even with Radical stalwarts of the Birmingham League, fee paying was nevertheless strongly opposed as certain to impose great hardship on hundreds of thousands of working-class families. It was held, indeed, that the mere prospect of inflicting such hardship would deter most of the new

¹ J. L. Garvin's *Chamberlain*, i, 109 sqq. By March 9th a deputation "of 46 M.P.s and about 400 members of the League representing nearly a hundred branches" was protesting to Gladstone. The Bill was for England and Wales.

² A retrospective survey will be found in John Morley's *The Struggle for National Education* (2nd edition, 1873).

³ Cf. Dr. Rigg's *National Education*, p. 230: "It is impossible to draw the line between class and class. The skilled workman in England is in proportion far richer, as a rule, than the professional man; the factory operative with his children at work, than the clergyman with his children to send to school; the foundryman than the striving physician. If schools and free education are provided for the operatives, they must assuredly be provided for the professional classes. . . ." Morley was obliged to deal not only with these arguments but even with the plea that free education was unfair to the bachelor who had exercised "prudence and self-control."

⁴ Richard Heath's *The English Peasant*, p. 125, for Dorsetshire money wages of eight and ten shillings a week, eked out with "extras."

school authorities from exercising their power of compelling school attendance by all children without exception.

Another section of the original Bill denounced by the League was that which proposed to create school authorities not by the direct popular election calculated to make a living issue of educational problems, but by authorising the Town Councils or Parish Vestries to nominate.¹ Still more hotly opposed was the section of the Bill that would have left the majority in any school authority free to impose, if they so desired, a sectarian religious syllabus upon the institutions which they supported or assisted from the rates.² In view of the actual conditions reigning in the countryside this, it was feared, might easily lead to a wholesale imposition of the Anglican Catechism and Prayer Book on the school populations of many areas. The addition of a "conscience clause" under which Dissenters' children would have been permitted to withdraw from such religious teaching would only have rendered the sectarianisation of publicly provided schools the easier because the more defensible.

In the course of the struggle against the Bill's more undesirable features the League developed a very formidable agitating power. Indeed, its 141 Branches, 20 adherent Trade Unions, and 13 Workmen's Auxiliaries permitted £5,871 of its £6,408 of income³ for the year 1869-70 to be spent on raising a stir big enough to force very considerable concessions from the Government.⁴ London, for example, was allowed to elect its School Board at once instead of waiting for a year, and the Government was even induced to stand firm against the Lords for Vote by Ballot there if not elsewhere. Again, all other School Boards, too, were to be elected by the ratepayers instead of being nominated by the Town Councils or Vestries; they were to be statutorily prohibited from assisting denominational schools from the rates, and in their own schools "no catechism or religious formulary which was distinctive of any particular denomination was to be taught."⁵

But despite these and other concessions Forster was never forgiven by his erstwhile Radical associates for a Bill which not only

¹ The Government finally gave way on this point.

² On this matter, too, the Government was compelled to give way.

³ *Beehive*, October 29, 1870.

⁴ *Hansard*, June 16th, shows Gladstone announcing his last "concessions." For comment see Francis Adams, *History of the Elementary School Contest*, pp. 223 sqq.

⁵ This is the famous "Cowper Temple" clause.

Political "Advance" in 1869 and 1870

did nothing to undo the strong Anglican grip on elementary education, but actually seemed for a time to have strengthened it. Thus 3,111 applications for Government subsidy were made on behalf of "voluntary" school-building schemes in the five months following the placing of the impugned Education Act on the Statute Book.¹ And in addition to special building grants for new schools the Church party had also been given the assurance that all their schools, new and old, would be allowed a new high scale of Government grants to enable them to offer the same facilities as the rate-maintained "board schools" of the future. It is, perhaps, not too much to say that Radical and Dissenting discontent with the over-tender manner in which the Church had been handled was a powerful contributing factor to the surprising weakness that was already felt to be overtaking the Gladstone Government in 1871.²

Contemporaneously with its Education legislation of 1870 the Gladstone Government was engaged in pressing to the Statute Book an Irish Land Bill. This time it was not Radical resistance which made the difficulties but Conservative. Yet thanks to J. S. Mill, Fenianism, and the unceasing stream of foreign condemnation of the Irish land situation, Gladstone, helped by in-

¹ H. Holman, *English National Education*, p. 186, which adds that until the special financial inducements offered in 1870 applications had been about 150 a year. John Morley's *Struggle for National Education* has the figures arranged differently (p. 17 n.) with a total of 3,330 applications, 2,885 of them Church, 82 Roman Catholic, 128 other denominations, and 235 unsectarian. It remains to explain why Forster felt it necessary to offer the Church party such conditions. An explanation may be provided from the eloquent speech of Mr. Winterbotham (*Hansard*, March 15th) attacking the terms offered to the Church: "They say the public faith is pledged to them, that they have been induced to build schools, and partially maintain them, by the expectation of public aid, and that therefore it would be a breach of public faith now to withdraw or withhold it. Now I think this is a most dangerous doctrine. . . . If the present system of voluntary schools aided by the state be a wise one, then let it be defended on its merits. But if it be not, and if it cannot be shown that it is for the public interest that the system should be continued, I deny altogether that any existing school has any, the smallest claim upon the public purse. When and by whom was this pledge given? Who had the power to give it? . . ."

² G. M. Trevelyan's *Life of John Bright* quotes letters of Bright to Gladstone in November 1871 containing the following: "The Education Bill has done a tremendous mischief to the party. . . . The Dissenters feel that somebody in London is working the Machine for the 'Church'. . . . Mr. Forster may be surrounded by an atmosphere which prevents a clear examination of the question. . . . The whole misfortune—and the magnitude of it cannot yet be measured—has arisen from the error of making the new Act instrumental in preserving and extending indefinitely the system of 'Denominational Schools'. . . ."

sistent pressure from Bright¹ inside the Cabinet, had decided that "advanced" Irish agrarian legislation must be attempted. Moreover, even the Tory Opposition was so far of the same opinion that it did not venture upon resistance of an uncompromising kind.

The Irish Land Bill of 1870, indeed, if "advanced" from the landlord point of view was, as Bright seems to have urged, very inadequate to the needs of the Irish agrarian situation. Some security of tenure at existing rents was granted to Irish tenants paying less than £100 rent annually by offering them the legal right to sue a landlord, who had given them notice to quit, for "unexhausted improvements" and even in certain cases for "disturbance" also.² Moreover, the creation of Irish peasant proprietors was projected in a plan by which Treasury money would be advanced for land purchase at low rates of interest and for very long periods.

But there were no provisions envisaging a general scaling-down of "excessive rents," and as usual Conservatives fought hard and not altogether in vain to alter even the Government proposals in favour of the landlords. One typical amendment, for example, pressed by the Lords would have removed all tenants paying over £50 a year rent from the scope of important parts of the Bill as strong enough to fend for themselves and as constituting a wholly improper class to designate for special legal protection. At one Parliamentary stage in July, indeed, the struggle over the Lords' amendments became heated enough to allow of a momentary refurbishing of the National Reform Union's machinery at Manchester and some ex-Chartist stir at Birmingham.³ But terms were come to between the Front Benches, and the Irish situation was disposed of to the degree in which a Bill, accepted by the great "Liberal" landlords and emasculated to

¹ Cf. Trevelyan's *Bright*, p. 410, for advocacy of State-assisted Tenant Purchase. The Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act of 1870 and the Protection of Life and Property Act of 1871 (both renewed) prove Fenianism's pressure.

² It is only fair to add that "Ulster custom" and analogous tenant-protecting practices already recognised by the Courts received Statutory fortification.

³ *Beehive*, July 2nd, reports that the Executive Committee of the Reform Union had discussed a possible campaign against the Lords. Meanwhile an old Chartist stalwart, now the Rev. A. O'Neill, had presided over a large meeting in Birmingham to protest against the Lords' amendments. The three specified were: (1) That which lowers from £100 to £50 the amount of rental on which a tenant arbitrarily evicted is entitled to claim compensation from the landlord. (2) That which reduces the scale of compensation to evicted tenants. (3) That which prohibits tenants from building cottages and granting land in conacre to tenants.

Political "Advance" in 1869 and 1870

meet the views of the great Conservative landlords, could dispose of it. But the announcement of May 25th from the American-Canadian border of yet another unsuccessful Fenian attempt to "invade Canada," and the heavy Old Bailey sentences imposed in July on two Irishmen charged with having forwarded "arms to be used by fellow-conspirators in Ireland,"¹ were plain indications that Irish troubles were far from over. On both sides of the Atlantic there were Irish Republican elements quite indisposed to accept the compromises of British party leaders as constituting "justice for Ireland."

A last backward glance at the Parliamentary Session of 1870 will reveal a number of "progressive causes," nearly always promoted by the Radical elements in the Commons, and of considerable historical significance in themselves even though it has not been found convenient to stop the narrative on their account. Thus on February 25th Mr. Hibbert obtained leave to bring in a Bill "for the relief of persons admitted to the office of priest or deacon in the Church of England who might desire to resign such office." It was, of course, a step designed mainly to aid those ordained clergymen who had been brought by "the new infidelity" either into direct unbelief or at least into a conviction of their own unfitness for the clerical office.² But the proposal to abrogate the old "indelibility of sacred orders" and to treat the clerical profession as one that might be abandoned on individual need for any other, was no unfit symptom of the type of secularist temper very strongly entrenched in large parts of the House of Commons majority of 1870. Other significant symptoms of this temper may be rapidly set out. On March 23rd a Burials Bill to permit Dissenting ministers to officiate in the parish churchyards, and soon to become the subject of annual contests between the "Church party" and its opponents almost as grim as those on Deceased Wife's Sister Marriages,³ obtained

¹ *Annals of Our Time*, under July 18th. One of the men sentenced was Michael Davitt. He was ordered fifteen years' penal servitude.

² *Ibid.*, under February 1, 1870, for a memorial presented to Mr. Gladstone by "thirty-four clergymen of the Church of England . . . setting forth the grievances under which they labour in consequence of the supposed indelibility of orders." J. A. Froude, the historian, was the best-known "clergyman" of the time anxious to discard his orders and the legal and professional incapacities inflicted by them.

³ On April 27th the "Marriages Bill" of the year had been forced to the Committee stage in a Division of 184-114, and subsequently sent to the Lords. There it was slain by 77 to 73 votes.

a vote of 233 to 122. It was a figure the more encouraging from the fact that the "Church party" conceived that its claim to keep the "monopoly" of the churchyard had been vastly strengthened by the Church Rates Act of 1868, since it could be argued that as a consequence of that Act's liberating the Dissenters from compulsory Church rates churchyard maintenance now fell in the last resort on Churchmen's voluntarily offered rates.¹ On May 24th, again, the project for the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, a project destined steadily to grow in political importance, obtained a Division as favourable as 65 against 209 at what was virtually its first Parliamentary appearance. Even more striking, perhaps, was the Division of June 21st on a motion for "relieving the Lords Spiritual (hereafter consecrated) from attendance in Parliament." To have raised a vote of 102 against 158 for a project of keeping all future Bishops out of the House of Lords was almost as significant as to have raised one of 191 against 66 for the compulsory as opposed to the optional abolition of Anglican Tests at the Universities.²

But even apart from the peculiarly symptomatic nexus of "Church and State questions" there were developments worth some attention. Thus on April 5th the "advanced" P. A. Taylor revived a Chartist cause when he asked the Commons for leave to bring in a Bill "to restore the ancient constitutional practice of payment of members." It was a cause with a future despite a losing Division of 24 against 211. Jacob Bright, the brother of the more famous John, actually took another "advanced" cause which had had the advantage of J. S. Mill's powerful advocacy,³ to a moment of temporary triumph. On May 4th Bright's Bill to give women the Parliamentary vote received a Second Reading

¹ Cf. *The National Church* for April 1873, when the Burials Bill of Mr. Osborne Morgan had become very "practical politics" indeed: "Mr. Disraeli, in his powerful and exhaustive speech, pointed out that when Nonconformists set themselves in array against church-rates, and obtained their abolition, they in reality forfeited all right to regard churchyards in future as national property. . . . If the churches and churchyards are national property, the nation is bound to support them; but if the nation refuses to do this, or to re-impose the church-rates, then it is evident that the churches and the churchyards are the exclusive property of the Church."

² *Hansard*, May 23rd. This was a Second Reading Vote. The Third Reading Vote was one of 247-113 on July 4th.

³ Mill's publication in 1869 of *The Subjection of Women* may almost be said to have provided the basis for the agitation on behalf of Women's Rights. He had been active in Parliament during the Reform debates of 1866-8, and had done something then to render the notion of the woman voter less strange.

Political "Advance" in 1869 and 1870

majority of 124 against 91. But the Government procured a reversal of the vote on May 12th, and on the 18th Bright's Married Women's Property Bill was decisively rejected in favour of a more cautious Bill from a lawyer.¹

It was naturally on their election grievances that the Radicals pressed most unitedly. Ministers might for a space have shelved the whole question of procedure at Parliamentary Elections (including the Ballot) by the device of appointing an Elections Committee,² but it was plain enough that there would be serious trouble with the Radical wing of the Parliamentary majority unless a Ballot Bill was made a principal Cabinet measure for 1871. Moreover, there was a considerable revival of old Radical projects for setting up elected county authorities to levy and expend the county rates in place of the unrepresentative J.P.s.³ There were plans also for the construction of a really efficient government for the Metropolis by putting it under one great authority instead of the welter of administrations which actually exercised control.⁴ For this great authority most Radicals would have claimed formidable powers.

¹ Dicey's *Law and Public Opinion in England during the Nineteenth Century* gives the legal view on Married Women's Property legislation.

² The Election Practices Select Committees of 1869 and 1870, nominated as such Committees are in proportion to party strengths, could only divide on party lines, e.g. 9 for the Ballot to 8 against in 1870. A Government Bill was nevertheless drawn up though no earnest attempt was made to push it to the Statute Book during the 1870 Session.

³ *Hansard*, May 31st, for Mr. H. Campbell's motion to apply the principle of representation to county government and finance. It was rejected in a small House by 61 against 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, May 18th, for Mr. Buxton's speech showing the Metropolis divided for one purpose into 39 districts, for another into 16, for a third into 54, and for a fourth into 90. The plan of creating a County of London with municipal boroughs exercising subordinate jurisdiction was already being proposed.

POLITICS GROW MORE AGITATED, 1870-1

"A large and enthusiastic meeting of working men was held, last Saturday evening, at St. James's Hall, to express their sympathy with the Provisional Government of France. . . . A resolution was . . . passed in favour of an immediate recognition of the French Republic. . . . Another demonstration in honour of the French Republic came off, on Sunday afternoon, in Hyde Park, and . . . processions from various points in the metropolis took place. . . . A deputation, organised by the Land Representation League,¹ waited on Mr. Gladstone, on Tuesday, to urge Her Majesty's Ministers to immediately recognise the French Republic, and to use their influence to induce Germany to refrain from insisting upon any annexation of territory. . . ."

"Illustrated London News," *October 1, 1870.*

"I am not . . . sorry to see the country fairly frightened about foreign affairs. 1st, because it is well that the mind of the nation should be diverted from that morbid spirit of domestic change and criticism, which has ruled us too much for the last forty years, and that the reign of priggism should terminate. . . . 2nd, because I am persuaded that any reconstruction of our naval and military systems, that is practicable, will, on the whole, be favourable to the aristocracy. . . ."

DISRAELI *writing January 25, 1871. (From BUCKLE's "Life.")*

"At present, and now for many days these Revolutionary Theories are allowed to produce what effect they may in the minds of the Working Classes. Gross misstatements and fabrications injurious to the credit of the Queen and injurious to the Monarchy remain unnoticed and uncontradicted. . . ."

QUEEN VICTORIA *presses Gladstone for a Government condemnation of the Republican movement, November 19, 1871.*

¹ Evidently a mistake and due, perhaps, to a running together by one ignorant of them both of the "Land and Labour League" and the "Labour Representation League." It is another of the tantalising indications surviving of a forgotten "Land and Labour" agitation conducted on what was, perhaps, a more radical and less careerist basis than the "Labour Representation" movement proper.

EVEN before the Education and Irish Land Bills of 1870 had been inscribed upon the Statute Book the Franco-Prussian hostilities had begun, which were fated to absorb the country's attention increasingly until Paris surrendered on January 28, 1871. During the war's opening stages English "public opinion" was almost unanimously turned against Napoleon as the aggressor.¹ After the proclamation of a democratic French Republic, however, working-class England, and especially its London leaders, made strenuous efforts to persuade the Government to undertake an authoritative mediation that would bring a prompt peace in which Bismarck would not be allowed to filch territory from a Republic guiltless of Napoleon's follies. Though the Republic had only been proclaimed at Paris on September 4th, two days after Sedan, the first large working-class meeting in its support was being held in London on September 10th. On September 19th a "Republican meeting" in Trafalgar Square expressed sympathy with France and urged the Government to mediate; and on September 25th there followed a Hyde Park demonstration by the "Republicans" intended to "compel" the English Cabinet to accord full recognition to the Republican Provisional Government in France.² Two days later a Trade Union deputation pressed Gladstone on the subject, and received the assurance that the French Provisional Government was already recognised "for all practical working purposes." On October 19th, as full recognition was still being withheld, the Radical stalwarts even attempted a torch-light meeting in Palace Yard.³

Meanwhile the almost unprecedented collapse of the Napoleonic armies was leading other sections of "public opinion" to become vocal also. Thus Lord Elcho, a well-known advocate of more "military preparedness," if it was desired to save the British Empire, urged in *The Times* of October 5th the necessity for

¹ This feeling was specially stimulated by Bismarck's skilful use of a "Projet de Traité" which he had once won from the French Ambassador to Prussia. This "Projet" caused strong anti-Napoleonic feeling in England as it envisaged a forcible French annexation of Belgium (*The Times*, July 25th).

² *Illustrated London News*, October 1, 1870.

³ The appearance of a combative working-class Republicanism at this time is largely ascribable to the disgraceful end which had overtaken the Bourbon monarchy in Spain during 1868, and the Napoleonic Empire in France in 1870. The influence of Bradlaugh, too, was important, and that of the International Working Men's Association counted for something.

requiring every man to undergo some militia or volunteer training. On October 6th the Radical Professor Goldwin Smith, though pressing the unfairness of directing Germany to lay down her arms before she was satisfied of her future security, hoped also "that all true Liberals throughout Europe will be led by this experience to labour more steadily, and combine more closely, for the gradual abolition of dynastic and aristocratic institutions, and for the tranquil inauguration of Governments thoroughly in unison with those popular and industrial interests, the ascendancy of which is the only security for international peace, as well as for national progress and happiness." Then, on October 8th, Professor Ruskin, in the *Telegraph*, agreed that the Napoleonic cult had driven French people and Emperor alike to destruction, but urged that "we ought to help France now if we did anything; but, of course, there remains for us only neutrality—selling of coke and silence."

Yet it was left to Carlyle, in a famous letter to *The Times* of November 18th, to formulate a view of the Franco-Prussian War which harmonised best with some of the strongest current prejudices of "public opinion." Bismarck must certainly have been delighted with the vigour and success with which Carlyle took the side of "noble, patient, deep, pious, and solid Germany" against "vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless, and over-sensitive France."¹ It became more than ever impossible for the British Government to press its mediation strongly upon the unwilling Prussians, and, indeed, even if there ever had been such a possibility, it had already been ended by the international crisis produced by Russia's refusal to be bound any longer by the Black Sea demilitarisation imposed upon her in 1856.²

Ultra-Radicals, nevertheless, resumed their attempts to force the English Government to do something for the French Republic. On December 18th there was a Republican meeting in

¹ The following are other passages from the letter: "There is no law of nature that I know of, no Heaven's Act of Parliament, whereby France, alone of terrestrial beings, shall not restore any portion of her plundered goods when the owners they were wrenched from have an opportunity offered them. . . . Alsace and Lorraine were not got, either of them, in so divine a manner. . . . The cunning of Richelieu, the grandiose long-sword of Louis XIV, these are the only titles of France to those German countries. . . ."

² For a time there was sufficient tension between England and Russia to induce J. S. Mill and J. A. Froude to protest against the warlike temper which was being excited against Russia (Letters to *The Times*, November 19th).

Trafalgar Square and a procession to the French Embassy; on January 10th a meeting in St. James's Hall urged the Government to resist Bismarck's "policy of territorial spoliation"; and on January 23rd Trafalgar Square saw yet another demonstration on behalf of the French Republic. It is interesting to note, moreover, that in a number of the constituency meetings held in the weeks immediately preceding the reopening of Parliament on February 9th the Ultra-Radicals attempted to strike blows for a Republicanism nearer than that of Paris. Members of Parliament were invited to pledge themselves to oppose the vote of a dowry and an annuity to the Princess Louise, whose approaching marriage to the Marquis of Lorne had been announced.

Well aware that the Queen and her large family enjoyed little real popularity with the "masses," fully cognisant of the plentiful sneering in which they and their Press indulged every time the ample State provision made for the royal family and their German relations came into question, Gladstone was nevertheless fated to have an easier task in carrying the £30,000 dowry and the £6,000 annuity than might have been expected. He had, indeed, been labouring strenuously at the sometimes distasteful task of urging the unwilling Queen out of the retirement from State ceremonies in which she had indulged since her widowhood,¹ and which had caused even "middle-class" circles to complain that she was not performing the very tasks in consideration of which such ample privileges and incomes had been allowed her.²

¹ Guedalla's *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone* amply shows from the Queen's own letters the unpleasantness which had to be faced in getting the Queen to entertain the Khedive of Egypt, for example, in 1869, or to consider opening the Thames Embankment in 1870. On January 3, 1871, however, Gladstone was writing with solemn joy: "Your Majesty's gracious intention to open Parliament, should circumstances permit, has been carefully kept secret; but Mr. Gladstone need not say how much he rejoices in every act, which without prejudice to Your Majesty's health, tends to make the monarchy of this country, in Your Majesty's person, visible and palpable to the people. . . ."

² It is worth quoting from the striking pamphlet, *What does She do with it?* by Solomon Temple, "Builder," 1871, a pamphlet issued after there had been a renewed Ultra-Radical grumbling over the vote of an income of £15,000 per annum to Prince Arthur on attaining his majority.

"Everyone sees and knows," wrote "Solomon Temple," "that there is a setting of the current in the English mind towards Republicanism. . . . The English people are a practical people. They do not like to pay for Royal State, and not to have it. They are a hospitable people, and they do not like to see Royal and illustrious visitors to the nation packed off to an hotel or an embassy. . . . There are persons who conjecture . . . that the annual saving from the Civil List has amounted to £200,000 annually. Calculating this at thirty years' accumulation they say it now represents the enormous sum of six millions, and adding the accumulations of interest and the additions made from other sources, they

That the Queen should have at last been persuaded to open Parliament in person (though, as she was careful to stipulate in advance, without having to read the Queen's Speech) probably helped Gladstone to carry the dowry through the Commons with only three open dissentients—Professor Fawcett, Mr. P. A. Taylor, and Sir Charles Dilke.¹ There were, of course, other "middle-class Radical" *frondeurs* on the Court question, though most of these were reserving themselves for the much better tactical opportunities presented by the debate of February 21st on the Duke of Cambridge's Commandership-in-Chief. On this occasion 83 members divided against the Government's 201 in support of what the Queen denounced to her Prime Minister as "Mr. Trevilyan's shameful attack on the Duke of Cambridge."² On February 25th the Queen's dutiful Prime Minister was again

say that the Queen's private fortune must now exceed the sum of ten millions. . . . In many state ceremonies a great deal of the splendour and show is derived from the presence of the Household troops, all paid for, and paid extravagantly by the nation. When the Queen used to give dinner-parties . . . the band . . . cost nothing to the royal entertainer. Two yachts are maintained for Her Majesty upon the Naval Estimates. . . . The expense of sending to meet foreign visitors, when there are foreign visitors to the Palace, was provided for by a vote. All the repairs on all the Royal Palaces are provided for by votes that are annually made in no grudging spirit. Large sums in the same way are annually voted for the maintenance of the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

"Solomon Temple's" best point was, perhaps, his proof that the Queen's Civil List had been fixed at £385,000 in 1837 on the assumption that she would, like William IV, find it necessary to spend £131,260 per annum on Household Salaries and Pensions, and £172,500 per annum on Household Expenses. In point of fact, Queen Victoria undertook great reductions in both and these "savings" one First Lord of the Treasury after another, according to Solomon Temple, had consented to transfer to the Queen's Privy Purse, "contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of the Act settling the Civil List."

¹ Cf. Guedalla, *op. cit.*, i, 273, for the tactical advantage which Gladstone established at the outset by vindicating convincingly and at length the Court's position that its incomes and grants were only the nation's return for the Royal Family's surrender of the Crown Lands. Gladstone's opponents were apparently unprepared for his line of argument, and the debate was closed before they had the chance of furnishing themselves with the kinds of figures which Bradlaugh was soon to issue in his *Impeachment of the House of Brunswick*. On the night of February 13th Gladstone wrote to the Queen: "To his agreeable but extreme surprise, no one said a word when Mr. Gladstone sat down after a lengthened statement, and the vote was passed without a single voice in the negative amidst loud cheers. Mr. Gladstone may appear to Your Majesty under these circumstances to have made too much of this matter; but he could not venture to reckon on such an occurrence as that Members of Parliament, who have within the last few weeks committed themselves publicly to a certain course, should then one and all shrink from fulfilling their inconsiderate engagement. . . . There are rumours that opposition to the proposal respecting Princess Louise is thought of at a future stage. . . ."

² *Op. cit.*, i, 274-6. The Queen was a warm supporter of her cousin as having been "most ungratefully and shamefully treated by a large portion of the public who are totally ignorant of military matters."

defending the Court, this time from the suspicion that there had been over-friendly communications between members of the Royal Family and German Headquarters.¹ Plebeian Ultra-Radicals had long seized upon the fact that Queen Victoria's eldest daughter was the wife of the Prussian Crown Prince as a ground for their suspicions that Court influence had prevented the English Government from vigorously opposing Prussia's proposed "dismemberment" of the French Republic against the wishes of the populations concerned.

Conducted though it was under the heavy frowns of the bulk of the "respectable classes" and the bitter hostility of all the "influences," the "Republican" agitation had certainly not been without its effects so far. The Queen and her family, for example, had undoubtedly been taught a certain amount of caution, and Cardwell's schemes of Army Reform, to take the first important instance, were probably somewhat less restricted in scope than they might otherwise have been by Royal pressure to ensure the maintenance of all the old prerogatives of the Crown's Commander-in-Chief.² But events in Paris were meanwhile moving in a direction destined to put the "Republican" agitation under a special handicap—a handicap which led to its abandonment by the greater part of those "respectable middle-class elements" that had hitherto lent the movement some countenance.³ Even before the election of the "Red Commune" on March 26th the angry insurrectionism of Paris working men, thoroughly discontented as they were with the great propertied majority just returned to the French National Assembly, was being treated most unsympathetically by the great bulk of the British Press. Here is one interesting comment from the Ultra-Radical pen of Professor Beesly, and printed in the *Beehive* of March 25th:

"If our newspapers are to be believed," wrote the Professor to the "Trades," "Paris is in the hands of a small body of bloodthirsty, cowardly roughs, bent only on murder and plunder: and all honest people every-

¹ *Op. cit.*, i, 276, for the Queen's warm approval.

² The full story is not, of course, available, and may not be for many years. But some indications will be discovered on p. 274 sqq. of *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*. The Prime Minister may be found repeatedly urged to impress the Royal point of view upon the far from revolutionary Cardwell and the Queen's "2 last letters to Mr. Cardwell from Osborne" are specially stressed on February 14th. Cf. also *Sir Charles Dilke on the Cost of the Crown*.

³ The Chamberlain circle at Birmingham may be cited as typical of those attracted by "Republicanism" at one stage. Another group very similarly attracted was that round Joseph Cowen on Tyneside.

where, whatever their rank in society, whatever their politics, should look with indignation and horror on the new Revolution.

"But the newspapers are not to be believed. . . . When it is a question between rich and poor, between genuine Republicanism and the manifold forms of privilege, they all sing the same song, which they know will please the upper and middle classes. As for the cheap weekly papers, they just transfer to their columns with scissors and paste-pot, the sensation telegrams, the highly-flavoured correspondence, and the perfidious comments of the dailies, and so, from pure ignorance and carelessness, propagate falsehood and bewilder the working class."

It may be imagined what the Press position in England became after the Communards undertook their desperate struggle against the troops and artillery of the National Assembly, and, above all, after they carried out their threatened shooting of the Archbishop of Paris and a number of other clerical hostages in retaliation for the refusal of quarter to themselves, and the multitude of summary executions inflicted even when quarter had been promised. It is perhaps worth giving large quotations from an illuminating editorial in the *Penny Illustrated Paper* to show how "perfidious" journalism could become even in a popular print affecting Radicalism whenever such a course promised to increase sales. On June 24th the *Penny Illustrated Paper* printed a long editorial under the rubric¹ of "The Apostles of Crime." Boiling together in one indignant Irish stew the "atrocities" of the lately suppressed Communards and the explanations offered in defence by the International Working Men's Association,² the Commune refugees, and the English "Republicans," it produced the following wisdom on the great strike of the day:³

When the time comes for the biographies of some of the most prominent of so-called demagogues to be written, two facts will appeal with startling distinctness to the working men of this country. First, how few are the men who, by impudence, self-assertion, and the desire for personal aggrandisement, contrive to monopolise public attention on behalf of "the working classes"; and secondly, by what shallow and remorselessly hypocritical knaves certain associations of working men are led and influenced. . . .

Such men are just now not only excusing and defending the crimes of the rabid horde which has tried to destroy Paris and to ruin France—to murder their afflicted mother that they might scramble and fight

¹ *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 1871, p. 386.

² The "International" split under the strain, a number of British working-class leaders resigning rather than face the storm of newspaper abuse called out by Marx's defiant defence of the Commune.

³ The Engineers' strike on Tyneside for the "nine-hour day."

Politics grow more Agitated 1870-1871

among themselves for what has been left of her belongings—but have gloried in these shameful deeds and held them up to Englishmen as an example to be imitated. It is time that these men were known for what they are, RELENTLESS VAMPIRES. . . .

These men the friends of the working classes! They would drain him of every extra sixpence, demand every farthing of his poor savings in the name of fraternity, reduce him to the sore straits indicated in our Illustration of the strike at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and degrade his wife to the lowest level of a debased humanity. If they are WITHOUT A CREED, as most of them profess to be, they have, at all events, a doctrine—the doctrine of devils. Listen to them in their mad outcry on occasions when they can venture to . . . rave against marriage. . . . They would have women to be no other than debased slaves to pander to the lowest passions; children as possessing no claim except that which might be loosely accorded to them by an entire community with little to spare from selfish indulgences. . . . We say that such men . . . who would betray their fellows for a bribe or cheat them for the sake of the means of self-indulgence—are just now endeavouring to ruin the cause of true and lofty Republicanism all over the world by advocating the COMMUNISM which has over and over again ruined Republicanism in France. In the name of THE TRUE REPUBLIC, the principles of which we are not the slowest to acknowledge, but the peaceful and sacred triumph of which we may not see in our day, we utterly denounce these terrorist wolves in the clothing of “International” sheep. . . .

That the “Republicans” should have ventured to stand their ground even against this spate of high-sounding moral indignation, that they should have refused to be discouraged either by the “spontaneous demonstrations of loyalty” evoked by the Prince of Wales’s illness at the end of 1871,¹ or the unfriendly Parliamentary reception given in March 1872 to “extreme Radical” attempts to probe the mysteries of the Civil List,² is ample evidence

¹ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, December 2nd, 9th, and 16th for the “feeling” gradually worked up by the constant harping of the Press on the subject. A Republican pamphlet, *The Coming Question*, had some very trenchant writing on the “loyalty fever” and its latent hypocrisies. The great Thanksgiving Day celebrations of February 27, 1872, were organised almost on the scale of the later Jubilees and formed no very favourable advance atmosphere for the “extreme Radical” Civil List motion of March 19th.

² In November, before the Prince of Wales’s illness, the Queen had been worried by Sir C. Dilke’s announcement that he would raise the question of the Civil List and the various other advantages enjoyed by Royalty in order that the nation might have explicitly the information which had always been denied in satisfactory form. Gladstone, too, was plainly worried, as may be seen from his long letter to the Queen of November 22nd deprecating the kind of action which the Queen desired as likely to open a debate with possibly uncomfortable consequences. By December 4th the Queen was largely reassured as to the thorough loyalty of “the bulk of the nation” and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was counter-attacking in a public speech drafted in consultation with the Prime Minister. For the unpleasant Parliamentary scenes of March 19th see *Illustrated London News*, March 23rd.

that the "Republican movement" possessed much genuine vitality. As late as May 1873 it was capable of calling a "Republican Conference" in Birmingham, which was attended by the representatives of eight London Republican organisations and delegates from forty provincial towns.¹ The Conference, too, sent Bradlaugh with a message of sympathy to the Republicans of a Spain still doubtfully swaying between Monarchy and Republicanism. But the effort to maintain a "Republican movement" distinct from the general body of Ultra-Radical activities was eventually abandoned. It was, of course, quite plain to Republican stalwarts that, given the suitable opportunity, their specific "movement" could always be revived. And, in point of fact, the Queen's unwavering determination, despite her vast wealth, to obtain for all her nine children, and even ultimately for some of her grandchildren, every traditional grant never really allowed angry criticism of the Royal Family to die down.²

It is time, perhaps, to return to the Parliamentary scene of 1871, and to record the efforts of Radicalism during the Session. Having at last decided that "concessions" would have to be made to Dissenters at Oxford and Cambridge, the House of Lords found Mr. Gladstone prepared for "statesmanlike moderation" in return. He asked, indeed, for no more than a Universities Tests Bill which, for example, still left 130 Fellowships at Oxford and thirty at Cambridge tenable only by Anglican clergymen.³ On February 20th Professor Fawcett led the "more advanced Liberals" in an attack on the continued reservation of this vast mass of educational endowment for the Anglican clergy. If he was beaten in a Division of 160-182, the figures were such as ultimately to discourage the Peers from persisting in their demand for sundry vital concessions over and above the 160 reserved Fellowships. When, among other things, the Commons

¹ A. S. Headingley's *Biography of Charles Bradlaugh*, p. 135 sqq.

² As late as 1885 (May 14th) a £6,000 post-marriage annuity for the Queen's youngest child, Beatrice, was only obtained after a Division of 337-38, and a £30,000 wedding portion after a Division of 153-32 (*Hansard*, July 7th). When in 1889 the question of "provision" for the Prince of Wales's children was raised, even the Conservative Cabinet advised the Queen to accompany her request to Parliament with an assurance that no attempt would be made to ask for incomes for any of the children of her daughters. But in view of the dissatisfaction of the Liberal Front Bench with this limited assurance, it had to be expanded to include the children of the Queen's younger sons. But, as may be imagined, there was still room for strong Radical objections to the terms of "settlement."

³ Leslie Stephen's *Life of Henry Fawcett*, p. 246 sqq.

declined to accept the principle of compulsory attendance at chapel or the imposition upon tutors of a declaration that they would teach nothing contrary to Holy Scripture, the Lords finally decided to take instead the requirement that all the Colleges should provide regular religious services for their Anglican members.¹

Fawcett was again to the fore in the struggle which took place over the Ballot Bill. After two years of Radical pressure the Government had at length decided to make Election Reform the subject of a Cabinet Bill. The Bill, besides providing for secret voting, would have reduced Parliamentary candidates' expenditure by taking polling costs from off their shoulders, and would have struck at the immense amount of bribery still surviving by declaring all payments not made through the official election agent to be corrupt. But as the great struggle of the Session developed on "Army Reform," the angry Fawcett found the Bill not merely delayed but the unenthusiastic Government giving it, according to him, insufficient support. After seeing the Tories defeat the Polling Costs clause on July 31st by so triumphant a majority as 256 against 160, Fawcett refused to allow the clause striking at corruption to be dropped by the Government, even in exchange for a pledge from Forster that it would eventually be reintroduced.² But when he divided against Ministers on August 1st his figures were no better than 84 against 181. The fate of the mutilated Bill was, however, already decided. The Government had made such rough weather during the Session and was being accused of so many "blunders" that the Lords felt that they might safely venture to refuse the Ballot Bill admission to the Statute Book. Their rejection was the safer in that it was undertaken on the specious ground that the principles involved in the Bill were of such importance that the fag-end of an agitated Session was not the right time to discuss them.

It seems hardly open to doubt but that the great troubles of the Gladstone Government during the 1871 Session were largely due to the impossibility of making the Parliamentary machine of that day grind out more than one or at most two "major measures" per Session—measures, that is, angering formidable "interests" and subject, therefore, to determined opposition. When, as in the case of the 1871 Session, the foreign situation imperatively de-

¹ Leslie Stephen's *Life of Henry Fawcett*, p. 276.

² *Ibid.*

manded important decisions of principle on "Army Reform," the Labour situation at home a Trade Union Bill, and, finally, different Radical sections of the Government's own supporters Ballot, Liquor,¹ and University Tests legislation, a most difficult Parliamentary situation was bound to develop. It was the more difficult in 1871 from the fact that "public opinion" was seriously concerned as to the international position, and yet the Gladstone Government was open to damaging charges of having reduced armaments so low² as to be completely powerless, whether in regard to Prussia's treatment of France, Russia's actions in the Black Sea, or America's demand for enormous *Alabama* damages. From the Opposition, too, came the charge of the Government's over-tolerance of Fenianism³ in Ireland, while different Radical sections complained bitterly of the insufficiency of the Government's Trade Union⁴ and Liquor proposals,⁵ or pondered revengefully on Gladstone's over-friendliness for the Court and Church, as illustrated by State dowries for the one and plentiful school grants for the other. If it be added that even the foundering

¹ See H. Carter's *The English Temperance Movement*, chapter 5, for a full account of the Temperance pressure on the Government.

² *The Beehive*, January 21st, reports activities in Greenwich (and Woolwich), Gladstone's own constituency, to require his resignation of the representation on the ground that: "Our trade has completely departed, our dockyards are silent . . . a fact of which Russia seems cognisant; and, in a word, your ill-timed and miserable economy has converted this old historic place into a scene of pauperism and desolation. When we turn from this dreary contemplation of our own affairs to the country at large, we find less reason to place confidence in you. The whole of the two last sessions were occupied in passing two measures affecting the sister-country . . . yet Ireland remains dissatisfied. . . . On looking to foreign affairs, we find it was reserved for the veteran leader of the Whigs, Earl Russell, to demand the immediate enrolment of 100,000 men for the defence of the country. . . ." The last sentence refers to yet another trouble of Gladstone's, the occasional emergence from retirement of Earl Russell, with proposals calculated to make trouble. Russell had declined the Cabinet place offered him by Gladstone in 1868.

³ Gladstone, in continuation of his policy of reconciling Ireland to the Union, had in December 1870 released a number of Fenians convicted of treason and treason felony on condition of their expatriating themselves. Queen Victoria could "not avoid remarking that no expression of regret or contrition has been heard, but that on the contrary the prisoners have maintained a defiant demeanour." She hoped also that "some guarantee for their good behaviour abroad" would be exacted, and that soldiers convicted of Fenianism would "not be included in the pardon" (*The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, I, 259-60).

⁴ Cf. *The Beehive*, February 25th. "The Bill . . . is in some respects good, but in others unjust and dangerous . . . if the definition of 'intimidation' is a good one, that of 'molestation or obstruction' is perfectly intolerable . . . picketing . . . would be made altogether impossible. . . . The gentlemen who drafted the Bill evidently had Sheffield on the brain . . . for upon no other hypothesis can we account for the numerous provisions in the criminal section."

⁵ The Temperance party wanted Local Option.

Politics grow more Agitated 1870-1871

in September 1870 of Britain's newest and most formidable battleship with great loss of life excited doubt concerning the efficiency of the Government's naval designing,¹ some of the Gladstone Cabinet's difficulties will have been set out. It becomes plain, perhaps, why Ministers had to capitulate almost at once to the huge outcry successfully raised against their Licensing Bill,² and why the match tax of the 1871 Budget had to be abandoned when Messrs. Bryant and May chose to allow their thousands of East End employees to parade through the City and West End their grim poverty and their fears of worse from the match tax.³

After the Government surrenders on the Licensing Bill and the match tax, not to mention others on Local Taxation and Local Government,⁴ it was, perhaps, inevitable that Opposition free-lances in Parliament should be encouraged to attempt greater things still. The principal Government measure of the Session was the Bill designed to end the system by which regimental officers had "property" in their commissions since they had bought them from previous holders and expected in due course to "sell out" again to junior officers of the requisite seniority. This system had plainly favoured the rise to the top ranks of

¹ The naval court-martial on the loss of the *Captain* hardly helped matters by recording "the conviction they entertain that the *Captain* was built in deference to public opinion as expressed in Parliament and through other channels, and in opposition to the views and opinions of the Controller of the Navy and his department. . . ." (*Illustrated London News*, October 15th).

² The *Beehive* thus summarised some of the Bill's principal clauses: "It proposes that, before granting licenses the magistrates shall decide what number to issue, subject to the veto of the ratepayers, who may diminish but not increase it. . . . The licenses are to be subject to an annual rent; will in the absence of any violation of the law remain in force for ten years and will be saleable by tender to the highest bidder. Existing licences . . . will be renewable of right for ten years subject to a modified license duty; when they expire . . . it will be for the magistrates and ratepayers to determine how many new licenses shall be issued. . . ." Then licensed houses were not to open before 7 a.m., and were to be closed in rural districts by 10 p.m., in provincial towns by 11 p.m., and in London by midnight. Sunday hours were to be between 1 and 3 in the afternoon and between 7 and 9 in the evening. Though only the hours restrictions were immediate while important reductions of public- and beer-house licenses would only become possible after ten years, the measure, denounced by the publicans as the "Government Robbery Bill" because it would reduce the transfer-value of their licensed houses, was too "advanced" to be able to stand against the energy of publican hostility and the money brewers and distillers were prepared to put into the contest.

³ Cf. the *Beehive*, April 29th, for an earlier stage of the contest.

⁴ Goschen, as President of the Poor Law Board, had drafted two ambitious Bills, the one proposing important changes in rating, and the other the setting up of Parochial and County Councils. They soon had to be dropped in a Session of the character of that of 1871.

the Army of those with wealth, the more so as prices were now being given well over those laid down in the pertinent Army Regulation. As it was almost universally felt in 1871 that the times were too dangerous to trust that a system of this kind would put the nation's best military talent in charge of its defence, it did not at first seem probable that really formidable opposition would arise to the Government's proposal to "buy back" the Army from the officers in order to be able to institute "promotion by merit." This appears to have been the opinion even of those who bitterly resented Gladstone's placing of Army reorganisation in the hands of the civilian Cardwell and who doubted whether the Prime Minister's figures of the cost of Army purchase were not being put too low.¹

Encouraged, however, by the patent loss of credit that had overtaken Ministers as a result of the mishaps of the first part of the Session, Opposition Army officers and their friends undertook obstruction with such determination that the Third Reading was delayed until July 3rd. Meanwhile, there had been a gradual evaporation of some of the "public opinion" originally favouring the Bill. The Opposition's insistence on the very serious costs of Army purchase² was one contributing factor, and another was the growing doubt as to whether "promotion by merit" might not mean promotion by intrigue and political manœuvring. The situation now offered the Conservative Peers special chances of paying off old scores, and they voted down the Government on Second Reading by 155-130.

To have accepted this rebuff would have been to sacrifice the last shred of the Government's credit. The Prime Minister therefore acted very vigorously. A unanimous opinion went from the Cabinet advising the Queen to abolish the Royal Warrant which had first instituted Army Purchase and pledging the Government to full compensation for the officers who would thereby be deprived of the right of selling the commissions they had once

¹ The Appendix to Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, however, contains a letter from Gladstone to Cardwell written on January 5, 1871, and suggesting that the War Secretary would not have been sorry to retire from a position whose special unpleasantness during the Session of 1871 he probably foresaw more clearly than his Chief.

² Gladstone had originally estimated the cost of compensating Army officers as lying between £7,400,000 and £8,400,000. But this was, perhaps, before he had gone into the question of "over-regulation prices." Certainly one Radical critic quite early in the Bill's history prophesied total costs of 15 millions (Mr. Otway, M.P., quoted in the *Beehive*, March 25th).

bought.¹ It would have been a serious matter for the Queen to have refused the advice here tendered for it seems plain that it would have entailed the resignation of the Ministry and the opening of a period of serious constitutional strife, with the Crown itself to some extent involved.² The Queen, however, decided to accept the Cabinet's advice. Purchase was abolished by Warrant, and the Lords were forced to accept the Bill which they had but lately rejected, in order to authorise the Government to pay officers their compensation.

There was, of course, much angry thunder from Tories in Lords and Commons as to the "violation of the Constitution" of which Ministers had been guilty in extricating themselves from Parliamentary difficulties by urging upon the Crown a use of the prerogative. It was the unfortunate Ballot Bill on which Tory wrath was destined to be vented. In the absence of the "closure" and "guillotine" methods elaborated by later days to deal with deliberate obstructionists, Forster needed all his determination to force a mutilated Bill through the Commons.³ But the fact that it was finally forced through and the majority in the Lords compelled to declare themselves before the prorogation, had its importance. Mr. Gladstone was able to open the speaking of the Recess with confidence. Certainly the Government took no harm from the vigour with which he assured a Whitby working-class audience on September 2nd that the Session of 1871 had been a most valuable one, and not least because now that the principle of the Ballot had been affirmed in the Commons, the Ballot Bill would be re-presented at the door of the Lords "with an authoritative knock."⁴

On Saturday afternoon, October 28th, the Prime Minister was less effective when addressing his constituents of Greenwich, Woolwich, and Deptford assembled in the open air at Blackheath. He was not as successful in strengthening the Government as he might have been. For several weeks the country had been led by Press

¹ Cf. *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, i, 293-4.

² It is just, perhaps, worth pointing out that a Bill giving Prince Arthur an annuity of £15,000 was soon to be discussed.

³ Many Liberal members seem to have been pledged to sit *en permanence* until the Bill was through, and there were dark hints, besides, that the Government might call an Autumn Session specifically for the Ballot Bill if all else failed to overcome obstruction (Cf. *Illustrated London News*, July 29th and August 5th and 12th).

⁴ *Illustrated London News*, September 9th.

forecasts to expect a major political pronouncement.¹ Instead Gladstone regarded his task largely as one of explaining to his constituents that they had not lost as much from sundry Woolwich and Deptford dockyard economies as had been represented. When he at length reached general topics the Prime Minister can hardly be said to have spoken with excessive felicity. To state in advance that non-political legislation would bulk largely in the agenda for the 1872 Session might please his Conservative opponents, but hardly gave satisfaction to the Radicals whose different wings had all sorts of political claims to press, from Redistribution to amendment of the Education Act. To go on to deprecate any hasty or violent action in regard to the composition of the House of Lords and to accompany this caution with the observation that most Englishmen had a "sneaking like" for hereditary institutions was calculated to antagonise Radicals still more.

Certainly the speech did little to stop the continuance of Conservative predictions, based often on by-election evidence, that the credit of the Government was declining fast. Indeed, on November 11th the *Beehive* informed its working-class readers that "the Municipal Elections have not turned out favourably to the Liberals. It would appear that there really is something approaching to what is usually called a Conservative reaction." It was the very time, too, when the first breath of the storm was felt that was to blow up so formidably during the 1872 Session on the matter of Gladstone's "irregular" nominations to the Ewelme living in the Church and to a Judicial Committee of the Privy Council place in the Law.² No doubt contemporaries liberally discounted the "righteous indignation" into which Conservative politicians and journalists succeeded in lashing themselves on these topics. But obviously the whole subject helped the Conservative struggle to win over "responsible public opinion" to emphatic disapproval of Gladstone's "Radical" proceedings and Radical following.

¹ *Illustrated London News*, November 4th.

² Both these appointments were really "irregular" in the strict sense as Morley's *Gladstone* freely admits (cf. i, 764-7; ii, 585).

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE GLADSTONE
GOVERNMENT

"The political Nonconformists are hastening on to an open alliance with the Socialists, and they have taken the pains to proclaim this to the world in a manifesto recently published in the *Fortnightly Review*. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, chairman of the Executive Committee of the Birmingham League, is the chosen exponent of the 'principles' of this new departure. A new name has been chosen, a new banner unfurled, and henceforth Nonconformists and their allies are to be distinguished by the name of 'The Irreconcilables,' and upon their flag is inscribed the motto, 'Free Church, Free Land, Free Schools, Free Labour.' . . . The true object of the movement is declared in the following sentence: 'The agitation for the secularisation of Church endowments and for dethroning the Establishment as a great political engine for repressing the freest intellectual life and thought, and for opposing the manifestation and fulfilment of the popular will and aspirations, will supersede and include all the minor subjects, such as the 25th clause (of the 1870 Education Act), the Burials question, and the abolition of clerical fellowships.'"

"The National Church," *October 1873*.

"The Education Bill was supposed to be needed because the system that up to 1870 had existed was held to be insufficient and bad; and the fault of the Bill, in my mind, is that it has extended and confirmed the system which it ought in point of fact to have superseded. . . . The people regard their schools as Church schools and chapel schools; they do not regard them as public and national schools, and as supporting a great system, in which the whole people unite for a great and national object. Then, again, with regard to the School Boards. . . . The mode of election appears to me about the worst for purposes of general and national education that could possibly have been devised. . . . When the School Board meets, there are the priest, the parson and the minister, and their partisans; but there is no free breeze of public opinion passing through them."

BRIGHT at *Birmingham, October 1873*.

THROUGHOUT the Session of 1872 the difficult *Alabama* negotiations weighed very heavily on the Cabinet and especially on Mr. Gladstone. A mistake of tact might easily have led to an Anglo-American deadlock from which there would have been no issue save war or a serious and even disgraceful surrender capable of ruining any Prime Minister and any Ministry however strong.

Yet in 1872 the Gladstone Ministry could no longer be regarded as strong. The Conservative attacks on the Government's alleged unconstitutional high-handedness as illustrated in the abolition of Army Purchase by Warrant and in the Prime Minister's two notorious patronage blunders of 1871 certainly tended to spread among "moderates" of the professional classes the impression that the Cabinet needed keeping in its place. The Trade Union leaders, meanwhile, pressed with increasing insistence for the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1871 which Ministers had insisted on putting on the Statute Book alongside their Bill for legalising Trade Unions:¹ the Dissenters demanded large alterations of principle in the Elementary Education Act of 1870; and the formidable Liquor Interest was still enraged over the abandoned Licensing project of 1871.² Finally, Conservatives were far from unsuccessful in diffusing a vague but widely spread alarm that Britain's place in world affairs had seriously declined during the tenure of a Ministry which, it was alleged, had incurred in rapid succession rebuffs from Prussia, Russia, and the United States. The international situation, indeed, was sometimes made to look more alarming still by Opposition insinuations that after having thrown the land defences out of gear by their so-called "Army Reform," Ministers were showing but scant capacity with Britain's other line of defence, the Navy. That the ill-fated *Megaera* should have gone down in 1871 after a parallel disaster to the *Captain* in 1870 was certainly unfortunate

¹ Cf. such items as the following from the *Illustrated London News* (November 18, 1871): "A great trades union demonstration took place at Bolton last Saturday. Several thousand persons employed in the coal, iron, cotton, building, and other trades marched through the town, and subsequently passed resolutions against the coercion clauses in the Trades Acts, and calling upon Government for their repeal."

² And was scarce better pleased by the much milder proposals which the Government put on the Statute Book as the Licensing Act of 1872. Many publicans appear from this moment to have worked for the downfall of the Ministry.

Decline and Fall of the Gladstone Government

for a Government compelled to authorise the experiments in design inevitable in seeking relatively high speeds for the massive gun-turreted ironclads which now composed the naval line of battle.

In these circumstances Ministers were probably wise from the Westminster point of view in declining to offer the Radicals any major reform other than the Ballot Bill. The passage even of this proved difficult and uncertain enough, for stubborn and prolonged opposition was again undertaken in the Commons in order to lighten the task of the Lords in effecting either the Bill's destruction or its emasculation. The Lords' majority would certainly have liked to reject the Bill outright. But this would have been bad strategy and might have allowed Ministers to rally all the disaffected Radical sections once more to their side at the very time when Conservative chances of a victory at the next General Election seemed to be increasing daily.¹ Accordingly the Peers confined their efforts to amendments calculated to achieve serious reductions in the intended effects of the Cabinet Bill.² Of these amendments the most insidious, perhaps, was that giving electors the choice of whether they would vote openly or by secret ballot. It was an amendment which would, of course, have permitted landlords and employers to require from their tenants, employees, and tradesmen open voting as a proof of their loyalty and so would have continued the virtually complete political infeudation of great portions of the country to their local magnates.

On this point, however, Ministers were encouraged to remain adamant by the obvious readiness of the House of Commons majority and the electorate to take fire if the Lords should attempt to dictate in election matters which, it could be plausibly argued, were matters peculiarly between the elected House and its constituents.³ But if forced to give way on the "optional Ballot" by fear of a Government resignation which would bring a dangerous

¹ Buckle's *Life of Disraeli*, v, 182-97, points as evidence to the great reception Disraeli was given in the London streets in a procession of February 1872, and to a similar triumph in Manchester in April when he came to praise the vigorously organised Conservatism of Lancashire.

² *Ibid.*, v, 174-6 and 199-200, throws important light upon the Tory strategy and its motives.

³ *The Times* came out so strongly against the Lords' insistence on the "optional Ballot" that, though the Tory majority had originally agreed to stand firm on this point, some Peers lost their nerve and prepared to accept lower terms rather than face a "Lords versus People" outcry.

popular clamour upon their heads, the Peers were still able to extort important concessions. The Ballot Act was made temporary instead of permanent so that by 1880 at furthest the whole principle could be fought over again in circumstances possibly more favourable to the "optional ballot." Moreover, as complete security against various kinds of election frauds, the Lords, against a good deal of Radical grumbling,¹ successfully insisted on a "Scrutiny Clause" providing for identifiable Ballot Papers and for their examination in certain types of challenged election. The Radical grumbling "below the gangway" over this Government concession to the Lords was not without its measure of justification. For years to come timid voters were restrained from feeling complete confidence in the secrecy of their votes by fears of such numbered Ballot Papers and later scrutinies as were here being provided for. It is curious, for example, to find that even in 1885 when the newly enfranchised farm labourers were canvassed on behalf of Radical candidates they often believed "that votes would be known and would be punished or rewarded."²

The *Alabama* verdict mulcting Great Britain altogether in £3,229,166 was to hand on September 14th during the Parliamentary Recess. Though no Conservatives ventured to suggest that the arbitrators' award should be disregarded or challenged, there were many to whom it supplied new missiles to hurl at the Government. First it could be argued that the Ministers had mismanaged the original negotiations with America in which the scope of the arbitrators had been defined and then that they had mishandled the presentation of the British case.³ Meanwhile, Radical and Ultra-Radical complaint against the Ministry was abundant. The Trade Unions continued their angry demand for the repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act; the "Birmingham" Education League persisted with its bitter campaign of opposition to the Education Act of 1870, and the Temperance and "drinking" wings of Radicalism alike criticised the shrunken

¹ *Illustrated London News*, July 6, 1872.

² Rev. W. Tuckwell's *Reminiscences of a Radical Parson*, p. 48. Mr. Tuckwell found it necessary to devote some of his electioneering energies in 1885 to convincing the labourers that their fear of the Ballot Papers was virtually groundless.

³ *Illustrated London News*, September 21st, shows that another point at issue was how the three millions and more of damages were to be raised. The Government was assured in advance that to add twopence to the income tax would be dangerous.

Decline and Fall of the Gladstone Government

Licensing Act of 1872 though for very different reasons.¹ Finally the Ultra-Radical stalwarts of the Metropolis waged their own war on the Government in defence of the unrestricted right of calling public meetings in the parks. And after the success of their strong measures of 1871 to save what was left of Epping Forest for "the people," their confident resistance to the Public Parks Regulation Bill of 1872 becomes the more understandable. Hoxton and Bethnal Green were even more determined not to have their Hyde Park meetings regulated out of existence by the Public Parks Regulation Bill² than they had been to stop "filching Lords of the Manor" from advancing their fences further into Epping Forest."³

The trouble caused to the Government by this working-class defiance of the Parks Regulation Bill is revealed in the following comment from the "moderate Liberal" *Illustrated London News*:⁴

"The events which have occurred within the last fortnight," wrote this journal, "will reflect discredit upon Her Majesty's Government to an extent which will hereafter greatly embarrass them. . . . We know not whether to be most mortified by the successful audacity of those who have ostentatiously set the law of the land at defiance, or by the impolicy, not to say imbecility, of the officials who have so mismanaged the authority delegated to them by law as to bring it into bad odour with the great majority of the public. . . . One does not like to see objects which he regards with devout veneration become the laughing-stock of the least loyal and most noisy section of the people. . . ."

Much of the "illegal" demonstrating which went on in the London parks during November 1872 was connected with a movement to force the Government to release the imprisoned

¹ *Illustrated London News*, September 28th, shows the publicans disregarding the Sunday closing restrictions of the Act and magistrates accepting their "bona fide traveller" excuses. Meanwhile veritable "public and prohibition parties" were being organised in different districts for the purpose of petitioning the magistrates at the licensing sessions in regard to hours of opening, closing, and Sunday sale.

² Even in the *Illustrated London News* (November 23rd) it was admitted "that if public meetings are to be entirely excluded from the metropolitan parks, by far the most numerous class of the inhabitants of London will practically lose the right of public meeting altogether." Meetings were held in defiance of the police and the regulations made under the Bill.

³ In 1871 it had actually needed the assembly of crowds of East Enders and their pulling down of "illegal" fences to force the Ministry to consider extricating itself from the clouds of legal doubts in which it had lost itself. Even then it was the City Corporation which, by resolute action, won the credit for saving Londoners great parts of their "inheritance."

⁴ *Illustrated London News*, November 23, 1872.

Fenians.¹ The Irish problem, as Gladstone knew from bitter experience, had not been settled by his Irish Church and Land Acts, and the most active politicians in Ireland were still gathered either into secret Fenian societies working for a Republic or into the Home Rule movement for forcing the Repeal of the Union. Fundamentally unsympathetic as he was to the programme of County Franchise Extension, Education Act Amendment, and Burials Bill² which the Parliamentary Radicals were seeking to force upon him in the name of "civil and religious equality,"³ Gladstone gladly turned away to Ireland for his main legislative project for 1873. To offer justice and improved educational opportunity to the young men of the Catholic middle class who so often proved the most dangerous of the Irish malcontents, might well have seemed to Gladstone the most hopeful "practical" step that could be taken. Besides, after the disestablishment of the Episcopal Church of Ireland in 1869 and the de-Anglicisation of Oxford and Cambridge in 1871, the problem of how to deal with Trinity College, Dublin, and its vast revenues still under Episcopalian control, could no longer be avoided. Even in 1872 the Ministers had been driven to threaten resignation⁴ when that energetic Radical, Professor Fawcett, tried to force on them a Dublin University Bill which they regarded as crude partly because it did not make the reorganisation of Trinity College part of a greater scheme which might "settle" the long-disputed Irish University Question.

In February 1873, then, Parliament was debating one of Gladstone's most elaborately contrived Bills after an introductory speech from the Prime Minister which had sounded so able and convincing when delivered that serious opposition had at first appeared unlikely even from the Tories.⁵ One of the most effective

¹ *Illustrated London News*, November 30, 1872.

² Cf. *National Church*, February 1873, for "the memorial presented by 186 Liberal Members, asking Mr. Gladstone to make the Burials Bill a Government measure."

³ Of course the greatest step in this direction demanded by a strong section of "advanced Liberal" M.P.s was Disestablishment. The vigorous Disestablishment propaganda of the period is well worth following in the weekly *Nonconformist* and the monthly *Liberator*.

⁴ Cf. *Daily News*, April 20th.

⁵ Buckle's *Disraeli*, v, 202, shows the Conservative leader still so much under the impression of Gladstone's great speech of February 12th that on the 15th he was writing: "I conclude there will be no attempt to oppose the 2nd reading of the Bill, though there will be a considerable debate thereon: and in Committee, though nothing ever succeeds in Committee, there will be an effort

Decline and Fall of the Gladstone Government

of Gladstone's points, for example, had been to show how the conscientious Catholics' avoidance of the "godless" Queen's Colleges and the Protestant Trinity College had produced a situation where the total number of students in Arts was but 1,179 for all Ireland—only 145 of them Catholic.¹ The Cabinet plan to remedy this unfortunate state of affairs was to form a new Irish University, including in its membership and degree-awarding scope not merely the Trinity College of the Episcopalians and the State-endowed "Godless Colleges" of Cork and Belfast,² but also the Roman Catholic University, the Presbyterian Magee College, and such other institutions of the requisite standard as might later come to be formed either by Catholics or by Protestants. The special advantage which the Roman Catholic University and other Catholic institutions would derive from inclusion in the new University of Ireland was not merely that their students would become eligible for State-recognised degrees and diplomas. It was also that the institutions themselves would have a claim, proportionate to their numbers, to benefit from a University Budget of £50,000 divisible among professors, fellows, exhibitioners, bursars, and examiners, and made up by an annual £12,000 from Trinity College—still, however, left the richest college in the world—£10,000 from the Exchequer, £5,000 from fees, and the remainder from the alienated revenues of the Church of Ireland. To meet the special conditions of the Irish case the new University was to have no jurisdiction over or examination of such study and teaching of theology, moral philosophy, and history as might be undertaken in the constituent colleges, and, indeed, the University staff was to be expressly prohibited from making allusions to forbidden topics even when teaching or examining in other subjects. Finally, the University was to have a special Council of Management, and all Gladstone's drafting skill and experience was expended in the effort to render the relevant clauses at one and the same time hopeful for the Catholics and not unduly alarming to the Protestants. The possibility of establishing a Catholic majority on the Council of Management was clearly held out but seemed unlikely to be turned into a reality

to establish the Professorship of Philosophy and History, and . . . to reconstruct the Governing Council."

¹ *Hansard*, February 12th.

² Galway, the smallest of the Queen's Colleges founded in 1845, was to be wound up.

for a generation or more unless there was a striking multiplication of Catholic colleges and students.

Gladstone very nearly succeeded with this bold attempt to turn the course of politics into a channel which deeply interested him and out of the troublesome tracts where he had found himself in increasing difficulties between Radical demands with which he had but the scantest sympathy and unremitting Tory criticism of his having given way to Radical pressure at all. But he underestimated the pertinacity with which the Catholic Bishops of Ireland, neglecting present "loaves and fishes," were prepared to block any educational settlement enactable at Westminster in the confident hope that they would ultimately have to be given their own terms, State endowment for institutions completely under their control. It speaks volumes for Gladstone's draftsmanship, indeed, that the Catholic hierarchy should have hesitated for weeks before coming to the decision to offer resolute opposition to the Prime Minister's Bill.¹ But once the Bill had been authoritatively rejected by the spokesmen of the very community it was intended to benefit, its Parliamentary prospects grew very dark. Thirty-five "Irish Liberals," twenty-five of them Catholics, resolved to oppose it and many more ultimately abstained. It was a situation which spurred Disraeli on to muster the strongest possible Opposition vote and lent importance even to the criticism of that academic Radical, Fawcett, who objected strongly to those restraints on the freedom and scope of the teaching that were being made into the very foundations on which the proposed University was being erected.²

How Gladstone resigned on the Bill's defeat and how he returned to office on Disraeli's declining the formidable task of constructing an Administration capable of guiding a hostile House of Commons through the Sessional routine, is hardly part of the present story. It suffices to say that the whole episode had ended

¹ Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii, 39, summarises Cardinal Cullen's condemnatory pastoral of March 9th, thus: "He described the Bill as richly endowing non-catholic and godless colleges, and without giving one farthing to catholics, inviting them to compete in their poverty, produced by penal laws and confiscations, with those left in possession of enormous wealth. The new university scheme only increased the number of Queen's colleges, so often and so solemnly condemned by the catholic church and by all Ireland, and gave a new impulse to that sort of teaching that separates education from religion and its holy influences, and banishes God, the author of all good, from our schools."

² As the division was 284 for the Government and 287 against, Fawcett's speech may well have been a deciding factor.

Decline and Fall of the Gladstone Government

the ability of the Gladstone Government to undertake the passage of anything but non-contentious legislation until renewed authority could be obtained from the "nation" at the polls. But that such authority would be given became increasingly unlikely after the Government sustained further damage in July from the "exposure" of a "Post Office scandal" revealing negligence both in the Post Office and at the Treasury.¹ Yet the Prime Minister met a most difficult situation with courage and resource. A very considerable Ministerial reconstruction was undertaken involving not merely the bestowal of non-Cabinet office on some able and hitherto restless "advanced Liberals," but also important changes in the Cabinet. Thus Bruce, the Home Secretary, who had antagonised the brewers and publicans, was moved to another post and Lowe, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had twice been in trouble at the Treasury, was transferred to the Home Office. On what was apparently the united appeal of the Cabinet, Gladstone consented to assume the burdens of the Chancellorship himself, thus raising prospects of strengthening the Government by a Budget similar to those which had already become historic. Finally Bright, who had retired from the Cabinet late in 1870 owing to illness and had remained away after his recovery owing to disagreement with Forster's education policy, was persuaded to return. Thus was it hoped to regain the allegiance of middle- and working-class Radicalism and to offer the Dissenting malcontents some prospect that their education policy would receive more Cabinet consideration than in the past.²

But the keenest-sighted politicians of the day persisted in their conviction that Gladstone's Government was now beyond political salvation. In September, for example, Joseph Chamberlain wrote an arresting article for John Morley's *Fortnightly Review* in which he took it almost for granted that the next General Election would see the Government's defeat.³ It would be a defeat, he held, due to the Cabinet's pursuit of Whig policies which had thoroughly antagonised the Radical Dissenters and Trade Unionists, who had brought Ministers into power in 1868.

¹ Cf. Morley's *Gladstone*, ii, 53-5.

² *Illustrated London News*, August 16th, was sufficiently impressed by the reconstruction to voice its doubts as to whether the long series of Conservative by-election successes really made it certain that a General Election would result in a Government defeat.

³ Cf. Garvin's *Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, i, 159-60.

But out of the approaching Gladstonian *débâcle*, hoped Chamberlain, would come the final elimination of faltering Whiggery from progressive counsels and the opening of the political chapter when Toryism and Radicalism would at last be allowed to stand face to face. For the new Radicalism of combat Chamberlain had prepared a remarkable programme summarised in the watchword "Free Church, Free Schools, Free Land, and Free Labour." A great political alliance was forecast against the "wealthy legislators ached up to the eyes and consolated up to the chin" who were obstructing political and social progress. State Churches would be disestablished, free Board Schools offered to the populace, the renting and even ownership of small parcels of land made easier for the country labourer by the abolition of Primogeniture and Entail, and, finally, the town artisan's Trade Unions would be freed from the legal nets and toils still threatening their operation under the Gladstonian legislation of 1871. Even unfriendly critics were compelled to see in this striking article the kind of fighting programme which might easily take Radicalism to electoral triumph in no very remote future.¹

Chamberlain, of course, even at thirty-seven had a remarkable eye for programmes and agitation, so much so, in fact, that he was already being regarded by such an experienced journalist as Morley as "the coming man" even before he had fought his first Parliamentary election. But in 1873 it hardly seemed to call for Chamberlain's special prescience to hold that the key to political power in the near future was with him who could win the confidence of the urban Trade Unionist and the agricultural labourer. In 1873 England was still enjoying the "boom" conditions which had been ruling for several years in succession and during all this time "Labour" had been making surprising advances in well-being and self-assurance. There was some retrocession, it is true, when industry began to slacken its pace and ultimately passed into the "great depression" of the latter 70's. But in 1873 the shorter hours which had been won during 1871²—often with-

¹ The unfriendly *Illustrated London News* (September 6th), for example, admitted that "Mr. Chamberlain's onslaught on the Ministry . . . may or may not have the significance of a party manifesto."

² Cf. the following from the *Illustrated London News* (October 28, 1871): "A gathering of the heads of engineering firms was held at Lincoln, on Monday, at which it was resolved to adopt the nine-hours system. The two principal firms of engineers . . . in Carlisle have intimated to their workmen that they will adopt the nine-hours system. . . . At a conference of miners held in

Decline and Fall of the Gladstone Government

out a strike and sometimes with increased pay—were still being held undisputed. The “great movement” among the agricultural labourers, which had opened so startlingly in the spring of 1872,¹ was also so far from spent that in November 1873 the greatest of the Labourers’ Unions claimed 1,000 branches and 100,000 members,² even after wage-increases of between 2s. and 4s. a week had been very widely won.³ The miners, too, were exceedingly active,⁴ and many local Trades Councils were carrying on impressive agitation⁵ against the Trade Union legislation of 1871 in order to prepare the way for demands upon Parliament by the Trades Union Congress.⁶ Most of the politicians, truth to tell, Glasgow on Monday, it was resolved to recommend a general agitation for short time in the hours of labour . . . and that an immediate advance of 6d. per day should be given.”

¹ F. G. Heath’s *The English Peasantry*, issued in 1874, gives a most valuable account. Useful supplementation will be obtained from Howard Evans’s *Radical Fights of Forty Years*.

² Heath’s *English Peasantry*, p. 201, where the circulation of the *Labourers’ Union Chronicle* is given at 30,000. There were many thousands of other labourers in smaller and more localised unions which resented the demand of the National Agricultural Labourers’ Union for three-quarters of local funds.

³ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, November 22, 1873, for the range which the Labourers’ Union now permitted itself in promoting emigration among labourers who were willing to go to better their own condition and reduce the danger of “surplus” at home: “Mr. Holloway, chairman of the Oxford district, said that he hoped to sail for New Zealand with a party of emigrants, consisting of 500 families, on December 15th. Various grants were made to assist intending emigrants. . . . The committee made grants of money to districts in which men were standing out against farmers who threatened a reduction of wages. . . . The *Birmingham Post* says that Mr. Arch and Mr. Clayden, who have returned, fully believe in Canada being a most eligible field for the emigration of agricultural labourers. Mr. Arch is going to try and send out 10,000 emigrants in the spring, when he will again visit Canada, and hopes to take out with him 500 families. . . .”

⁴ *Ibid.*, “The refusal of the coal-owners of Durham to grant the miners an advance of 20 per cent . . . is looked upon as the forerunner of a dispute of an alarming character. The Ruabon colliery masters have refused the advance of 25 per cent asked for by the men. It is stated that the men will persist in their demand. One of the Scotch miners’ unions has passed a resolution to fine every member 7s. 6d. upon every occasion of his breaking the rule of the union not to work above five days a week. The conference of the National Miners’ Association began, on Tuesday, in Leeds, under the chairmanship of Mr. Alexander Macdonald . . . an announcement (was) made the number of miners represented was 130,000. . . .”

⁵ *Ibid.*, November 8th: “A great open-air demonstration of Scotch working men took place last Saturday at Glasgow, at which resolutions were passed demanding the total repeal of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, protesting against the criminal clauses of the Masters and Servants Act, and the application of the law of conspiracy to questions of labour; and pledging the meeting, which is said to have numbered 50,000 of whom 25,000 took part in the procession, to vote only for those candidates for seats in the House of Commons who would support these reforms.

⁶ W. J. Davis, *The British Trades Union Congress*, gives the 1874 Congress as representing 153 societies with a membership of 1,191,922. It met in January at Sheffield.

could hardly have widened their knowledge of the national life better than by carefully studying the Parliamentary programme which the Trades Union Congress's Parliamentary Committee was preparing to recommend to the full Congress.¹

The Prime Minister, however, was spending the Recess in seeking a way to rescue his Government from electoral disaster by effecting a successful stroke in finance.² The goading of an Opposition now confident³ to the point of insolence continued, of course, unabated and rose to a notorious climax in Disraeli's well-known message of October 1873 in support of a Conservative by-election candidate at Bath. "For nearly five years," wrote the Tory leader, "the present Ministers have harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class, institution, and species of property in the country. Occasionally they have varied this state of civil warfare by perpetrating some job which outraged public opinion or by stumbling into mistakes which have always been discreditable and sometimes ruinous. All this they call a policy and seem quite proud of it: but the country has, I think, made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering. . . ."⁴

An approach so near to blackguardism, however, defeated its own immediate ends⁵ and was certainly less dangerous than the niggling which the Opposition had commenced on Gladstone's acceptance of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. There was apparently some measure of legal doubt as to whether Gladstone ought not constitutionally to have resigned his seat and asked for re-election after he had added the Chancellorship to the First Lordship of the Treasury. Gladstone, indeed, had put himself into the hands of the Law Officers as soon as questions were raised, but, despite his perfect correctitude, the matter, if exploited by the Opposition, was capable of throwing the entire Session of 1874 out of gear. Undoubtedly this vexatious situation must have had a part in deciding Gladstone for a General Election.

¹ It will be found above, p. 124.

² Cf. Morley's *Gladstone* for his planning as early as August 11, 1873, to abolish income-tax and the sugar duties (vol. ii, p. 64). A great Budget surplus was certain.

³ By-elections had of late gone with almost monotonous regularity against the Government.

⁴ *Illustrated London News*, October 11th.

⁵ The Tory attack on the seat was repulsed by a majority of 139 votes, though a Prohibitionist intervention had seemed at one stage very likely to add Bath to the long list of Conservative by-election gains.

Decline and Fall of the Gladstone Government

Moreover the programme of the 1874 Session as planned for the existing political position was singularly unattractive. Conscious of their loss of prestige and the readiness of the majority of the Lords to make every variety of trouble, Ministers had decided that the "progressive" legislation demanded by different wings of Radicalism could not be inscribed on the Government programme. Neither the Burials Bill demanded by Dissenting congregations to enable their ministers to officiate in parish churchyards nor the Bill for the reform of London government sought by the Radicals of the Metropolis could be conceded because the one might irrevocably antagonise the Church and the other the City. In the existing temper of the Lords, again, it was apparently held that it would be but to invite dangerous humiliation to send up to them Radical Bills to abolish Primogeniture in Land Inheritance and to set up elected County Boards to take over County administration from the Justices. Even the extension of the County franchise had been omitted from the Government programme and left to the private enterprise of the "advanced Liberal" G. O. Trevelyan. Yet it was a subject exciting an increasingly vocal following among the miners,¹ factory workers, and artisans of industrialised non-borough areas who for the sake of the "landed interests" control of county divisions had been left without the vote conceded to their workmates in the boroughs. "Progress" in the draft Government programme for 1874 seems to have been mainly confined to the resolution to offer the Trade Unions some improvement on the legislation of 1871.

It is not therefore difficult to see why Gladstone was tempted to dissolve Parliament rather than face such a Session as that of 1874 promised to be. Moreover, he had pondered deep enough on financial issues during the Recess to have elaborated a plan for offering the country a total repeal of income tax, a reduction of local rates, and much cheaper sugar.² It certainly seemed to most of his colleagues to offer them reasonable hopes of escape from a position of increasing powerlessness and humiliation.

¹ Cf. John Wilson's *History of the Durham Miners' Association*, p. 88, for the formation in 1873 alongside that association of a Franchise Association. "Although incidental to the labour organisation and with a voluntary contribution, it was managed by the leading men in that Association."

² Prosperity had brought great Exchequer surpluses, expected to continue for some time, and additional means to finance the scheme were to be obtained by reducing military and naval expenditure below the high points they had reached after 1870.

Accordingly the Cabinet accepted Gladstone's very vigorous letter of January 24th to his Greenwich constituents as its manifesto for the General Election that followed on the Dissolution which Ministers advised and the Crown accepted. The Cabinet's course is the more understandable when it is remembered that even in quarters like *The Times*¹ the Gladstone letter and the offers it contained bred a belief that it might very well win the Government a majority. Wavering members of the richer mercantile and professional classes could hardly have been offered anything more tempting than income tax abolition nor hesitant country town "moderates" anything more to their taste than a large decrease of rates and a large increase of Exchequer responsibility for local services.

As is well known, the elections resulted in the return of a Tory majority of 50 in place of a "Liberal" majority of near 120. It seems fairly certain that the bitter resentment of the publicans, mindful still of the Licensing Bill of 1871 and the Licensing Act of 1872, played a very great part in most of the surprising borough victories of the Tories. Anglican dislike of "secular" Board Schools patronised by the "infidel," of Irish Church Disestablishment to placate the Fenian, and of University Tests Abolition to aid not merely Dissenters and Catholics but Jews and Atheists, tended to make the normal Churchman the ally of the publican in strenuous desire to secure the ejection of the Government. In Sheffield, for example, such a strong Radical candidate as Joseph Chamberlain was defeated in an election in which a very prominent part was played by the publicans and their placard "Stand by Your National Religion and Your National Beverage."² In Brighton, again, Professor Fawcett, admittedly one of the most useful Radical members in the last Parliament, was left at the bottom of the poll when two Tories, one "a wealthy and successful yachtsman" and the other "a distinguished cavalry officer," defeated the two sitting Radicals.³ "We have been borne down in

¹ Cf. Sir Edward Cook's *Delane of The Times*, p. 286 n.: "*The Times* predicted a small majority for Mr. Gladstone, and supported his side, on the whole, though not very strongly."

² J. L. Garvin's *Life*, i, 167. The publicans were intent on returning the veteran ex-Radical, J. A. Roebuck, who had long ago developed those characteristics which caused him to end his career as one of Disraeli's most valuable allies. He was successfully placed at the top of the poll with Chamberlain's ally, Mundella, as second member.

³ Stephen's *Life*, p. 384. A seat was, however, found for him almost at once at Hackney, a two-member London constituency created in 1867.

Decline and Fall of the Gladstone Government

a torrent of gin and beer,"¹ summed up Gladstone and added in further explanation: "Next to this has been the action of the Education Act of 1870, and the subsequent controversies. Many of the Roman Catholics have voted against us because we are not denominational; and many of the dissenters have at least abstained from voting because we are."² He might have added, too, that many average voters without strong political convictions had allowed more than five years of platform and newspaper criticism of the Government's errors to persuade them that it might be well to give the other side a chance. It is the mood in which the non-party voter executes what Lord Salisbury was later to call "the swing of the pendulum."

¹ Morley's *Life*, ii, 76.

² When there was a question of erecting a School Board in his own home parish of Hawarden during August 1873, Gladstone had opposed it on the ground of the "more thorough education" given by a system based on religion and because he had seen figures showing that "the Voluntary Schools only cost £4 10s. for every child, whilst the Board schools caused an expense to the ratepayers of £9" (*The National Church*, September 1873).

Though Gladstone in answer to Radical protests claimed that the Church party in their comments had given remarks of his a general bearing which had only a local application, the total effect of the episode must have been to increase Dissenting suspicion and ill-will. Meanwhile Gladstone's reference to the Catholics illustrates another ecclesiastical factor to take into account in assessing the results of the General Election. The Catholic priesthood was even more determined to arrest "secularising" tendencies in Board School education than was the Anglican; and the result had often been seen in the *ententes* established on School Boards to fetter the Radical Dissenters and "Secularists." In numbers of Northern constituencies the immigrant Irish elements, under priestly control, had increased so rapidly as to make the Catholic vote an important consideration even before the Reform Act of 1867. (Cf. *National Review*, April 1863, for the resultant dilemma of Lancashire M.P.s on such matters as Italian unity at the expense of the Pope.) Though while Irish Church Disestablishment had still been to win, the Catholic vote had normally gone to "Liberal" and even to "advanced Liberal" candidates. In 1874 it seems often to have been cast in favour of candidates standing for "religious" and against "secular" education.

PARTY CONTROVERSY, 1874-6

"The Liberal Leaders.—What is a party without leaders, without organisation, without even a programme of political action? The fact is that the Liberal party is dead. . . . The lesser members of the Liberal party still tell us in grandiloquent language that Gladstone's five years was a glorious time! To me it seems a most inglorious time. . . . They did nothing they were not forced to do by public pressure. . . . The total defeat will be a wholesome lesson for the Liberals, and the future progressive party. . . . If half-a-dozen or a dozen leading House of Commons Radicals were to unite and draw up several heads of political policy, and declare that no party or leader should have their support or come into office who would not swallow their programme, they would form a nucleus round which a new and living party would soon rally."

A "Beehive" Editorial, December 26, 1874, warns "Labour" against supporting Front Bench Liberalism.

"After a fortnight of the most unceasing labor and anxiety, I . . . have purchased for England the Khedive of Egypt's interest in the Suez Canal. We have had all the gamblers, capitalists, financiers of the world, organised and platooned in bands of plunderers, arrayed against us, and secret emissaries in every corner, and have baffled them all. . . . I believe the whole country will be with me."

Disraeli to Lady Bradford, November 25 and 26, 1875. (From BUCKLE'S "Life.")

"All the hopes and schemes of the Opposition have now failed: Suez Canal, Slave Circular, *Vanguard* Minute, and royal titles. I begin to feel as if it were the end of the session, but I suppose the fires may yet burst out again. March is too early for despair, even for the desperate. . . ."

Disraeli to Lady Chesterfield, March 22, 1876.

"It is no use attempting to conciliate the Dissenters. They take all you offer, and the very next minute will fly at your throat. The Education Bill . . . was liberally conceived, and we made, in the course of discussion, several important further concessions to the Opposition. We could only induce our own friends to yield these on our promise that their amendments, or proposals, should also be considered; but the moment we granted anything to our own friends, there was a fierce cry of 'reaction'. . . ."

Disraeli to the Queen, August 3, 1876.

THE Disraeli Government, which was formed in February 1874, hardly seemed to be facing any difficult Parliamentary ordeals when in March it took charge at Westminster of what was bound to be a short Session. For one thing it was supported in the Commons by a relatively united and confident phalanx of 350, while the Opposition, though sometimes counted as 302, was very seriously divided.¹ The bulk of the "Irish Liberals," for example, had now formed their own Home Rule group of 58 whose views on religious education, public-houses, and the "burdens on agriculture"—to take only three subjects in the foreground of politics—were embarrassingly apt to resemble those of the Tories and to differ widely from those of "Birmingham League" Radicals. Among British "Liberals," too, there were influential groups of varying political tradition and descent—Peelite, Palmerstonian, and Russellite—who were ready to help the Government in resisting the "extremer" demands of Radicalism, especially Disestablishment of the Church of England.²

The Ministerial task seemed to be further lightened by the wonderful Budget situation the Cabinet had inherited. With a surplus of six millions Ministers could go through the motions of taking minuter care for the Defence Services than the last Government,³ and still have the money left to distribute all manner of good things. The working man was offered abolition of the sugar duties; the ratepayer, Exchequer grants in aid of local Police and Lunatic Asylum services; the income-tax payer, reduction of the tax-scale to as low as 2d. in the pound; the farmer-breeder, an end of the duties on horses, and the financial purist, a half-million of reduction in the National Debt.⁴ Nor were the publican and the Trade Union leader omitted from the Government calculation. The publican was allowed not what he wanted, of course, but some consolatory modifications of the Licensing Act of 1872. The Trade Union leader, for his part, was to be

¹ Cf. *Nineteenth Century*, November 1878, for Gladstone's own account of the situation in the article "Electoral Facts."

² It should perhaps be remembered that Scottish Radicals were arguing with even more point for Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland.

³ Cf. P. W. Clayden's *England under Lord Beaconsfield*, pp. 37-40, for the bluster of Ward Hunt, Disraeli's First Lord: "As long as I remain at the Admiralty, it must be understood that I do not mean to have a fleet on paper; that whatever ships appear as forming a part of the strength . . . must be real and effective ships, not dummies."

⁴ P. W. Clayden's *England under Lord Beaconsfield*, pp. 42-3.

allowed to state his grievances to a Royal Commission on the "Labour Laws," and was awarded besides a new Factory Act despite the alarm it excited among factory-master Radicals of the "Manchester School."

Adroit and politically profitable as all these things might seem to be, the Tories were not destined to escape their share of political trouble. The party was still above all a Church and State party, and so was impelled, in the words of its Radical enemies, to attempt as much for the parson as it had done for the publican. Parsons were offered, in effect, an end of the Endowed School Commissioners whose de-Anglicisation of educational foundations had aroused in them the bitterest wrath;¹ a bold attempt to bolster up the State Church of Scotland; and, finally, Government assistance for the Archbishop of Canterbury's Bill for the "Regulation of Public Worship" and the seemly suppression of Ritualistic practices. To help the Archbishop to check the "lawless" introduction of unpopular "Romish ceremonial" into the parishes certainly seemed as effective a way as any other to prevent the further weakening of the Church.

Each one of these three "Church and State" subjects, however, was destined to give the Government considerable anxiety before the pertinent legislation was placed on the Statute Book. Thus on the Bill for the "Regulation of Public Worship" there were some unseemly jurisdictional wranglings between Bishops and Archbishops well calculated to increase the distaste of large portions of the "Liberal" public for the whole State and Church connexion. It was a distaste utilised, of course, to the utmost by the Radicals of the Liberation Society who, after the conclusion of the Session, thought it worth while to go farther and issue a special circular illustrating the large amount of Parliamentary time which had been taken from urgent secular business in the hopeless and improper attempt to turn Parliament into a Church Synod.² Had it not been for the widespread detestation

¹ Cf. *The National Church*, for January 1873: "It behoves Churchmen, while preparing to resist the open attack threatened by the Liberationists on the endowments of their Church, not to shut their eyes to the process of 'sap-ping and mining' by which their property is being certainly though silently taken from them. Our Endowed Schools are now undergoing a process such as this. The noble provisions made by God-fearing Church of England founders, for the Christian education of our middle classes, are under the stealthy operation of the Endowed Schools Act of 1869, being one by one wrested out of the hands of Churchmen and Church trustees. . . ."

² *Beehive*, August 22nd. This "Labour" paper was strongly Liberationist.

of the Ritualisers,¹ in fact, and the hope that the Bill was at last setting up a jurisdiction capable of dealing drastically with them, the "public opinion" even of 1874 might have been more easily moved to protest against a situation which forced Parliament to spend scores of valuable hours wrangling over vestments, candles, incense, and the like. It was a further argument for Disestablishment that the Session had ended with many Government and more private members' Bills abandoned for lack of time.²

The Bill to strengthen the State Church of Scotland proposed to do so by conceding the point which had caused the "Great Disruption" of 1843. Lay patronage was to be compulsorily terminated for a maximum compensation to the patron of one year's value of the living, and even this modicum of compensation Ministers hoped would not be claimed by those landowner-patrons who were anxious to assist in the truly Conservative work of strengthening a threatened State Church. Unfortunately for the Government's plans, however, they aroused the bitter hostility of the Free Church and the United Presbyterians, the principal Dissident Presbyterian bodies, claiming, the one, to have more true adherents than the State Church, and the other, nearly as many. One reason for the special bitterness called out by the Government's Bill was that it promised to entrench in the manses those "worldlings" who had profited so largely by accepting the lay-patronage principles which the State was now abandoning. More than this, the Bill not only offered no restitution even to the Free Church ministers who still survived from 1843 and had been compelled to see ever since the worldlings quartered in their manses and drawing their teinds,³ but worse still might come in the future. Now that the Government had conceded the principle

¹ *Beehive*, August 2nd, for the anti-Ritualist feeling: "Individual men and women in England, if left to themselves, would live in the spirit of the present day, its tolerance, its humanity. . . . But these same men and women would not be safe in the hands of priests who, insisting on the continuity of the Church, think of the power and authority of the Middle Ages . . . and who talk of apostolic succession, not that they may imitate destitute and despised fishermen, but that they may deck themselves in the trappings of an insolent, domineering and cruel caste. . . . Let these men be cut loose from all connexion with the state. . . . Let them be stripped naked of every scrap of State property. . . ."

² Cf. Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii, 81, for proof that even Gladstone was moved to think in terms of Disestablishment after the Session of 1874, some of whose proceedings he likened to "a debased copy of an ecclesiastical council."

³ Cf. J. F. Bright's *History, 1837-1880*, p. 510: "They had been driven from the Church, they asserted, upon this very point, and here was the Establishment declaring itself in the wrong, but taking care to keep the endowments."

of parish election of ministers, could Free Church or United Presbyterian flocks be trusted to go on taxing themselves indefinitely for the upkeep of their own chapels and ministers? Nay, was it not the avowed hope of Government supporters that the Bill would result in the steady drift of Free Church and United Presbyterian flocks back to the parish churches?¹

Though the Scottish Patronage Bill, therefore, had been hailed by one exultant Tory member as "a very bad Bill for the Liberation Society," though it was passed through its decisive stage in the Commons by a majority as large as 307 against 109, the outcome was probably hardly what the Government had expected. During the winter the Liberation Society successfully launched a promising "movement" for the Disestablishment of the Scottish Church, and at the series of public meetings held, "the most noticeable part in the proceedings was the extent to which the leaders of the Free Church took part in the proceedings."² In the face of what they considered as aggravated injustice and peril, many Free Church leaders finally abandoned their long hesitation about joining a movement virtually committed to a complete sundering of all the State's relations with religion. Disestablishment of the Scottish Church, in fact, was soon being regarded by the Liberal leaders as likely to become "practical politics" in the near future.

If the Cabinet had insisted on forcing its original plans on to the Statute Book in the third great set of ecclesiastical debates of the 1874 Session, those on the Endowed Schools Bill, Disestablishment of the English Church might have joined Scottish Disestablishment as a cause advanced much nearer to the sphere of immediate "practical politics." But the attempt to go back on the Endowed Schools Bill of 1869, and to expand very widely the classes of educational endowment that were left under exclusive Anglican control, provoked an enormous storm and plainly revealed into what danger the excessive Churchmanship

¹ *Beehive*, July 18th, thus paraphrases an Opposition speech from one who was to become Prime Minister: "Mr. Campbell-Bannerman regarded the measure as a counter-move to check the negotiations for union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterians, the two most powerful religious bodies in Scotland; it was, in fact, nothing but a scheme to draw members from the other bodies to the Church of Scotland."

² *Ibid.*, December 19th, under the rubric of "Disestablishment in Scotland."

of men like Lord Salisbury¹ might take the Cabinet. When on July 24th Disraeli rose to tell the Commons that the "disputed clauses" would virtually be dropped, he was probably doing more than robbing Opposition Radicals and the Liberation Society of a formidable chance of agitation. He was probably putting Lord Salisbury, his most difficult colleague, in his place for the second time that month² and giving the legislative initiative for 1875 to the less ecclesiastical and much safer Mr. Cross. Understanding Churchmen, too, guessed that even without the Salisbury bravado much had been done for them by a Bill which might be "mutilated," but which yet dismissed the detested Endowed Schools Commissioners and ordered their reorganising work to be taken over by Charity Commissioners who, nominated by a Tory Government, would presumably in many unobtrusive ways show greater tenderness for the Church and "religion."³

Yet the partial success which had been obtained against the Government Bill seems to have encouraged a certain amount of hopeful Radical activity during the Recess. Chamberlain, Dilke, and Morley represent some of the Radical generalship waiting eagerly for the chance of raising a cry and founding an independent party, and Chamberlain, at least, thought it worth while to commit himself in October 1874 not only to Disestablishment, but to Disendowment with the scores of millions that would release for social purposes and, especially, for free education and an end of school pence.⁴ A Liberation Society Conference at Manchester showed itself so attracted by the new cry that the organ of the Church Defence Institution was moved to the fol-

¹ Nominally the Bill was Lord Sandon's who had the Education Department, but everyone knew Lord Salisbury's special interest. For years Salisbury had led the party in the Lords which had harassed the Endowed Schools Commissioners and magnified every chance infelicity in their schemes for reorganising old foundations. Even the Commissioners' most far-sighted activity—the financing of local scholarship systems from old endowments—was not beyond attack when parish outcries were raised against revenue diversions.

² On the Public Worship Bill Disraeli had been compelled to tell the Commons not to pay too much attention to what might be said in the Lords by that "master of jibes and flouts and jeers," Lord Salisbury.

³ Under the Bill the Government had power to add two new temporary members to the Charity Commission and the *National Church* (August 1874) remarked, after congratulating itself on the dismissal of the Endowed Schools Commission: "We trust the Government will exercise the greatest circumspection in the choice of the new Commissioners, as from the shape the Bill has now assumed, very much of its successful working must depend on those who will be entrusted with carrying out its provisions."

⁴ Cf. Garvin's *Chamberlain*, i, 218-21, for the relations between Chamberlain, Dilke, and Morley at this stage.

lowing bitter comment:¹ “. . . The Liberation Society bids for the support of the masses by dangling the plunder of the Church before their eyes, and by promising it for the education of the people. And so to this at length the high-minded Liberationist leaders have come. Plunder instead of principle. ‘Vote for us, give us the power to strip the Church bare, and we will give you a fair share of the plunder!’ ”

There were other Radical paladins in the field who considered that it would be easiest to raise a mighty cry against the “reactionary” Ministry by putting Further Extension of the Suffrage and More Equitable Redistribution of Seats in Parliament in the forefront of a Radical programme. The Reform Acts of 1867-8 had, after all, still arranged to leave the counties in the hands of the “landed interest” by the simple device of fixing county voting qualifications which excluded not merely the entire farm labouring community but also the hundreds of thousands of colliers, ironworkers, and textile employees who lived outside borough boundaries. Within the borough boundaries, too, registration conditions were such that hundreds of thousands more found themselves habitually excluded from the electoral lists and, finally, the Tories and Whigs of 1867-8 had combined to save so many small boroughs that in 1875 it was still possible to show how 30,000 electors in small constituencies returned a total of 44 M.P.s, while 541,000 electors in large boroughs returned only 35.² Captain (later Admiral) Maxse,³ who had served a political apprenticeship in J. S. Mill’s Land Tenure Reform agitation, chose these facts as the foundation basis of his Electoral Reform Association, an Association committed to go considerably farther with Parliamentary Reform than the Committee mustered behind Trevelyan’s annual Motions in the Commons for County Franchise Extension. Unfortunately for Captain Maxse his attempt to expand his Electoral Reform Association into a national organisation went awry. The carefully prepared Con-

¹ *National Church*, December 1874, which quotes among other speakers the advanced Radical lawyer, Dr. Pankhurst, as follows: “It is disendowment which stirs the country; it is disendowment which the country wants: it is disendowment which alone can make this a truly national question, because these masses of property are wanted for the common weal. . . .”

² *Whether the Minority of Electors should be represented by a Majority in the House of Commons?* A Lecture upon Electoral Reform by Captain Maxse, R.N., p. 12.

³ Maxse was the model for the naval Radical in Meredith’s political novel, *Beauchamp’s Career*.

ference at which a national "movement" was to be launched insisted on adding Women's Suffrage to the other electoral reforms to be undertaken and thereby ruined the "movement" from the start in the mind of all "practical" politicians.¹ It was not till the more experienced Radical agitators of the North revived the National Reform Union of Manchester in the winter of 1875 that there was a second extra Parliamentary Radical movement of power to place alongside the Liberation Society.²

Meanwhile the Tory Government in office did not intend to stand idle and wait for the working up of a Radical storm. The industrious Mr. Cross was occupied in drafting an Artisans' Dwellings Bill, intended to exhibit the Tories in the character of the real friends of the badly housed town workers, and Labour Bills, designed to convince the Trade Unions that the Tory Government was prepared to be more helpful than Gladstone's had been. Then there was an Epping Forest Bill for London, a Metalliferous Mines Bill for the mining community, a Trade Marks Registration Bill for the merchant and manufacturer, a Friendly Societies Bill, and even an Agricultural Holdings Bill to win tenant-farmers from attention to the Radical land plans of organisations like the Land Tenure Reform Association and the Labour Representation League. Farmers were offered the right to claim compensation for unexhausted improvements, but, as Radical critics were quick to point out, landlords were not forbidden to require their tenants to "contract out" of this benefit as a condition of tenancy.³

The Tory Sessional plans were nevertheless ably enough drawn up to deserve the success which attended them, and the Recess of 1875 found the position of the Tory Government noticeably strengthened. There might have been a few awkward moments during the Session, indeed, as when Mr. Osborne Morgan's

¹ Cf. *Beehive*, December 12, 1874: "Of course gallant and enthusiastic men will insist that the women shall have votes, but they may as well be told before they enter on their Quixotic task that all they will do will be simply to secure the Conservatives more power by dividing the Liberal ranks and obtaining for the Liberal cause a crack-brained character. . . ."

² *Report of the Special Conference of the National Reform Union . . . in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, . . . December 15th, 1875 . . . to an enlarged platform and revise its constitution.*

³ Cf. P. W. Clayden's *England under Lord Beaconsfield*, p. 88: "... A secret agitation was carried on by the landlord majority in both Houses of Parliament to prevent" the Government from forbidding contracting-out "with the result that it (the Bill) proved useless."

Annual Burials Bill could only be defeated in a Division of 234-248, and when Mr. Plimsoll, the Radical leader of the crusade against "coffin-ships," forced the Government to amend the Merchant Shipping Acts by a famous if unparliamentary protest instantly echoed through the country.¹ But candid critics admitted that it was not every Tory Session that could show a positive record of achievement like that of 1875, nor every Tory Home Secretary who could, like Mr. Cross, win the thanks of the Trades Union Congress for his Employers' and Workmen's Bill and even for his Conspiracy and Protection of Property Bill.

What helped to increase the strength of the Tory Government's position was the marked and growing lack of cohesion among the Parliamentary Opposition. Even in the 1874 Session, Gladstone had been shrinking with distaste from the cheerless task of leading, for an indefinite number of years of Opposition, the jangling groups of Whigs, Irish and Radicals which composed "the Liberal party."² By temperament he was a crusader, anxious not so much to sit night after night in the Commons setting traps for the Government and encouraging his followers to do the same, but rather to spend his strength converting the country to some cause or causes which made a strong moral appeal to him. During the 1874 Recess he was unable to withhold himself from plunging into a cause which had long had a very special attraction for him—opposition to the Catholic policy which had launched the Vatican Decrees in 1870 and had ruthlessly enforced them afterwards against some of the very finest figures of the Catholic

¹ *Hansard*, July 22nd: "I will ask . . . as to the following ships, the *Tethys*, the *Melbourne*, the *Nora Graeme*, which were all lost in 1874 with eighty-seven lives, and the *Foundling* and *Sydney Dacres*, abandoned in the early part of this year. . . . I shall ask if the registered owner of these ships, Edward Bates, is the member for Plymouth, or if it is some other person of the same name. And, Sir, I shall ask some questions about members of this side of the House also. I am determined to unmask the villains who send to death and destruction. . . ." In view of Mr. Plimsoll's remarks bringing him into peril of Parliamentary censure, Clayden, *op. cit.*, p. 86, reports: "This Parliamentary incident roused strong feeling in the country. Sympathy with Mr. Plimsoll was universal. On the very next day Mr. Chamberlain, then Mayor of Birmingham, called a town's meeting on the subject; and the example was followed by Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Bradford, Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester, and many other towns, as well as by some of the London boroughs. At all these meetings the Government was warmly denounced for its indifference to human life, and the demand was raised for instant legislation. . . ."

² For a graphic picture of the trouble which overtook the Opposition in consequence of Mr. Gladstone's rare appearances in the House see Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, ii, 138-9. "It appears to me absolutely impossible," wrote Goschen, "that things can go on as in last session."

community.¹ In taking such a course Gladstone went a good way towards making his retention of the Opposition Leadership impossible. In the first place the Irish "Liberals," most of them under the control of the Irish Catholic Episcopate, were certain to be more difficult to lead after Gladstone's sensational anti-Vatican pamphlet. And in the second, there was dismay among many British "Liberal" politicians that their leader should be making "unnecessary" trouble by rushing into alien ecclesiastical disputes which were no direct concern of his and the party's.

Gladstone, it is true, was simultaneously making a last disconsolate effort to see if he could rouse himself to frame an Opposition policy which would enlist his fighting interest² and carry the conviction that it could be converted into "practical politics." But as he ran over the possible items in a letter to Lord Granville, the Liberal leader in the Lords:³

1. Extension of the suffrage, with redistribution of seats abreast or in the rear. 2. Disestablishment in Scotland, England. 3. Land laws. 4. Retrenchment. 5. Colonial policy, territorial extension of the empire. 6. Reform of local government taxation. 7. Secular education. 8. Undenominational education. 9. Irish affairs.

he could not refrain from the conclusion that: "On no one of these is there known to exist a plan desired by the entire party, or by any clear and decisive majority of it." The truth was that he was already pregnant with a second anti-Vatican pamphlet, more pungent than the first, and was still labouring under "the anti-Parliamentary reaction" which induced him to think "that the welfare of mankind does not now depend on the state or the world of politics; the real battle is being fought in the world of thought."⁴ In January 1875, therefore, Gladstone formally and

¹ Cf. *The National Church*, December 1874: "Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet is being translated into French and German, and before long will be as well known on the Continent as it is now in every part of the United Kingdom. It is a singular fate which has led the statesman who has done more than any man living to strengthen and consolidate the Ultramontane power in Ireland, to aim at the Papacy, the most formidable blow it has received for generations."

² Cf. Morley's *Gladstone*, ii, 80, for Gladstone explaining to his wife early in April 1874 his attitude towards the House of Commons: "I could cheerfully go there to do a work; but I hope and pray to be as little there as possible, except for such an aim."

³ *Ibid.*, ii, 82.
⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, 80, which shows that in April 1874 Gladstone was thinking not of assaults upon the Vatican but upon Agnosticism and Atheism: "whose deadly attack is made with great tenacity of purpose and over a wide field, upon the greatest treasure of mankind, the belief in God and the gospel of Christ."

gladly laid down the party leadership from which he had largely abdicated already and Lord Hartington, heir of the great ducal house of Devonshire, was chosen to head the Opposition in the Commons instead. Forster would in many ways have been a better because a less Whiggish and more Radical choice.¹ He was, moreover, a heartier fighter. But his Education Act of 1870 was still bitterly enough resented by the Dissenters and their representatives in the House to induce him to abandon a hopeless candidature in order to give Hartington's choice the appearance of unanimity. Yet there must unquestionably have been the gravest doubts about the final choice of one who in the party counsels preceding his formal election had shown so little heart for the work of overthrowing the Government as to pen the following:²

My suggestion . . . was not exactly that we should do without a leader: but that the Whigs or moderate Liberals should have one, the Radicals another, and the Irishmen a third. I think that there is hardly any important question on which the Whigs and Radicals will not vote against each other: Disestablishment, Household Franchise in the Counties, Education, Land Laws, etc. . . . If each section had its own leader and its own organisation, it seems to me that there might be more real union and co-operation on points where we could agree than if we were nominally united.

But even though the prestige of the Tory party had been considerably enhanced by the Sessional record of 1875, even though the Parliamentary Opposition was so divided and so uninspiringly led as to present hardly a prospect of dramatic political changes at Westminster, there was before long to be evidence enough of the possibility that sudden gusts of popular passion outside Westminster might effect what the Front Opposition Bench could not. Thus throughout the winter of 1875-6, the surprising subject

¹ Cf. *Beehive*, January 30, 1875, for the view of Professor Beesly, who wished to destroy the existing Liberal party in order to clear the way for one much more advanced: "The choice of Mr. Forster instead of Lord Hartington would, I am inclined to think, prolong the life of the Liberal party as at present constituted. That is quite a sufficient reason why we should deprecate it. Poor Mr. Forster! He had spent four or five years in cultivating a useful personal understanding with the Tories, and he proposed to devote four or five more to patching up his somewhat damaged reputation for Radicalism, and playing off little winsome arts upon the Dissenters. . . . Mr. Forster knew how to make the Education Act a bulwark of Church influence, and his idea of disestablishment might probably be to set the clergy free from State control with an independent annual income of three millions. It would be better to stand still with Lord Hartington than to march forward on such terms with Mr. Forster. . . ."

² Bernard Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire, 1833-1908*, i, 143-4.

of the treatment to be given to foreign fugitive slaves escaping to British ships of war possibly gave the Government more anxiety than any part of its Sessional programme. Yet that programme included the hotly debated Royal Titles Bill for bestowing upon the Queen the suspect title of Empress of India,¹ legislation for completing Disraeli's startling and unorthodox acquisition of the Suez Canal shares and, domestically, a "progressive" Education Bill worrying to the Government's own supporters!²

The Fugitive Slave excitements of the winter of 1875-6 arose, in the first place, from an Admiralty Circular sent to Naval Officers serving in foreign waters in order to give them the definite instructions which might help them to avoid incidents with those powers, like Brazil, that still maintained the institution of slavery. Unfortunately for the Government the circular seemed to represent a large retreat from the humanitarian practice of former days³

¹ The savour of militarism and autocracy that was held to lurk about the Imperial title was best described by the Newcastle Radical, Joseph Cowen (*Hansard*, March 23, 1876): "The Government under which they lived was a strictly constitutional one. What the Ministers wished them to do was to graft upon their constitutional forms the name and style of a military, autocratic, irresponsible and arbitrary power. (Hear, hear and applause according to newspaper reports.) In changing the name, he feared they might change the character of the Government. Phrases had a curious habit of transmuting themselves into facts. The liberties they enjoyed had been too dearly bought, the privileges they rejoiced in had been too stoutly fought for, to be surrendered even in appearance. (Hear, hear.) They could not be too jealous of regal and despotic encroachments. . . ."

² This Bill, together with Mr. Cross's Bill for the preservation of Commons from enclosure and the Board of Trade permanent Bill to placate Mr. Plimsoll represented the principal Government concessions to "progress" and "humanity" for the Session, concessions which the astute Disraeli doubtless judged as necessary prophylactics to be taken annually by a Tory Government. Under the Education Bill compulsory schooling would be indirectly extended from the areas of School Boards, radical enough to apply their compulsory powers, to the whole country. By 1881 no child under ten was to be in employment nor any child between 10 and 14 who had not attended school 250 times in each of five previous years or passed an examination in the Fourth Standard. Moreover, neglectful parents might be fined and truant children sent to industrial schools.

³ The Circular is in the *Annual Register* for 1875. P. W. Clayden, *op. cit.*, p. 96, summarises it thus: "A Fugitive Slave was never to be received on board a British ship 'unless his life would be endangered if he were not allowed to come on board.' If he came on board in territorial waters, he was not to be permitted to remain if it was proved that he was a slave. If he were received on the high seas he was to be given up when the vessel returned within the territorial limits of the country from which he had escaped. If he claimed protection on the ground that he had been detained contrary to treaty, the case was to be investigated in presence of his detainers, and if his claim was established, 'the local authorities should be requested to take steps to insure his not relapsing into slavery.' Finally, the officers were exhorted, when surrendering fugitive slaves, 'to obtain an assurance that the slaves will not be treated with undue severity.'"

when British ships had not been discouraged from straining international law very far provided that the strain arose from dislike to slavery. As soon, therefore, as the intelligence spread "in the country," the indignant Nonconformist ministers and Radical notabilities of provincial towns, who formed the backbone of every Radical agitation, began a fermentation that soon grew serious enough to induce the Government first to suspend its Circular in October and then to withdraw it entirely in November.¹ But when a new Circular appeared in December formidable agitation was renewed despite the official assurance that the Lord Chancellor himself had seen to it that every possible right that could be validly claimed for British ships in international law was being asserted. The temper which forced the Government to beat a second retreat in the Queen's Speech of February 8, 1876, and to offer a Royal Commission of Inquiry may be illustrated from the following writing in a "Labour" paper of the time:²

Two months have not passed since the country was aroused from sea to sea by the Admiralty Slave Circular; and so great was the indignation which it excited that one Cabinet Minister was compelled to disclaim all knowledge of it, and another Minister outside the Cabinet declared that it was so obviously a blunder that not a word more was to be said about it, except that it was due to some subordinate official. But though Sir Stafford Northcote was ignorant of the circular and Mr. Stephen Cave acknowledged it not, Lord Derby admitted his joint responsibility with Mr. Ward Hunt. The public indignation was, however, too great for the circular to be maintained. . . . But almost before the storm has passed away, lo! Ministers have put forth a new circular which the Conservative *Standard* suggests must have been inspired by some mischievous demon. . . .

Just as revealing is the subsequent report³ that "meetings of a very enthusiastic character are being held all over the country at which strong resolutions condemning the issue of the second Fugitive Slave Circular have been passed."

In short, the Radical "busybodies," so detested by the average Tory, were already panting for action.⁴ A great Northern band

¹ Cf. the indignant P. W. Clayden, *op. cit.*, p. 97: "When a correspondent of the *Daily News* discovered the Circular, and that journal called public attention to it . . . the public read it with a feeling of the deepest indignation. It reversed what everybody believed to be English policy. A great agitation quickly sprang up, and in the latter part of September meetings were held all over the Kingdom. . . ."

² *Beehive*, January 8, 1876.

³ *Ibid.*, January 15, 1876.

⁴ *Ibid.*, for Sir William Harcourt to his Oxford constituents: "Some of my

of them had just refounded the National Reform Union of Manchester on as wide and likely a basis as the following:¹

The Reform of the Representative System, by the extension of household suffrage to all householders in the counties, and the equalisation of electoral power.

Religious Equality—involving the disestablishment and disendowment of the English and Scotch Established Churches, and the establishment of a national unsectarian system of education.

A thorough revision of the Land Laws, so as to provide such systems of tenure as will promote the best cultivation of the soil, and secure a fair valuation of the land for purposes of national taxation in proportion to its increased value.

Popular control over Licences for the Sale of Intoxicating Liquor.

And when in the course of the summer of 1876 the Tory Ministers again placed themselves in an apparently anti-humanitarian position on the subject of the "Bulgarian massacres," such a fierce agitation was raised that the Parliamentary Opposition, almost in its own despite, repeatedly seemed on the verge of power. So likely, indeed, did it appear that the "old Liberal gang" might float back to office on the crest of a wave of feeling they had done nothing to evoke that at least one advanced Radical, who hated Whigs almost more than Tories, shouted a loud "caution" to his Labour readers:²

"What I wish to impress upon the readers of this paper," wrote Professor Beesly, ". . . is the necessity of not allowing the leaders of the so-called Liberal party to trade upon this cry of horror and use it as a means of wriggling themselves back to office. If the Liberals are of little use to workmen when they come in pledged up to their necks on workmen's questions, what could be expected of them if they owed their victory to nothing but a generous outburst of indignation against

impatient friends ask me, 'When do you think the Government will go out?' They will go out just when nobody expects, and on an occasion which no one anticipates. Since I last spoke to you, the Suez affair has been in difficulties. It has overthrown . . . at all events the Egyptian Prime Minister. . . . When a Government makes an investment first and then sends out a Commission to investigate its value, when it places its policy at the mercy of the rumours of the Stock Exchange, and the intrigues of the Seraglio, the best that can be said of it is that it is a precarious policy. Then there is the Fugitive Trade Circular. . . . These are symptoms which indicate that even Conservative governments are not infallible or immortal . . . I am no believer in the longevity of Administrations. . . ."

¹ The official *Report of the Special Conference* (p. 6) announced that 739 delegates had been present from 173 Liberal organisations. The refurbished Union seems to have been well enough supplied with funds to undertake considerable pamphlet publication and lecture-sponsoring in the years which followed.

² *Beehive*, September 16, 1876.

English Radicalism 1853-1886

the sorry jests of Lord Beaconsfield? Could anything be more convenient for our Whig landlords and Liberal plutocrats than to drown all other cries at a general election in loud denunciations of Mahomet and Sir Henry Elliot. . . . If possible, therefore, let us make an example of Lord Beaconsfield. It is he alone who, by his inability to comprehend that other men do really for the most part care something for the difference between right and wrong, has brought upon the Ministry the accusation of having connived at the Bulgarian atrocities. . . . Let the storm of popular indignation burst upon his single head. . . . On the other hand working men should beware how they lend a hand towards helping the last ministry back to power."

But full treatment of the situation calls for another chapter.

THE EASTERN QUESTION, FIRST STAGE

"I entreat my countrymen upon whom far more than perhaps any other people of Europe it depends, to require and to insist that our Government which has been working in one direction shall work in the other, and shall apply all its vigour to concur with the other States of Europe in obtaining the extinction of the Turkish Executive Power in Bulgaria. Let the Turks now carry away their abuses in the only possible manner, namely, by carrying off themselves. Their Zaptiehs and their Mudirs, their Bimbashis and their Yuzbashis, their Kaimakams and their Pashas, one and all, bag and baggage, shall I hope clear out from the province they have desolated and profaned."

GLADSTONE'S *famous pamphlet on "The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East"* (September 1876).

"The country has been delivered over to the most pernicious agitation ever set afloat within the memory of its oldest inhabitants. . . . This year, under the auspices of a great statesman . . . public speakers have been heard upon nearly 500 platforms, arousing the warlike fury of the people, demanding the expulsion of a numerous race from the territory which they have inhabited for centuries, denouncing their own Government for moral and material, if not purposed complicity with massacre, spoliation and rape. . . ."

The Tory "Blackwood's Magazine," November 1876 (p. 632).

"My Dear Gladstone,—I find from your letter that I misunderstood you when some time ago you showed me Chamberlain's letter. My recollection was that he invites you to Birmingham, as an exception from their rule of not inviting strangers to their political meetings; that he stated that the object of the meeting was partly to keep alive the feeling of the country respecting the Eastern question, partly to reorganise the Liberal Party . . . I understood you to say that if you went, it would be to speak on the Eastern question, and to keep yourself aloof from the other portions of the programme. I presume that Chamberlain's object is not to reorganise the whole Liberal party, but to strengthen the young Liberal and more advanced portion of it, and to secure you, willing or unwilling, as leader. . . . I am much afraid of misconception on the part of the public."

EARL GRANVILLE *disapproves of Gladstone's addressing Chamberlain's new National Liberal Federation, May 21, 1877.*

THOUGH British market-places were not set ringing with the "Eastern Question" till August and September 1876, the Chancelleries of Europe had been occupied with it for a considerable time before that. A dangerous new threat to the "integrity of the Ottoman Empire" had arisen during the summer of 1875 in the shape of a serious Christian insurrection. Alarm was not merely caused by the inability of the Turkish Government to suppress the Orthodox Slav insurgents of Bosnia and Herzegovina or offer them guarantees of better government which they would accept. There was the further fear that the self-governing Serbians and Montenegrins, relying on popular Russian sympathy, would plunge into the struggle with a call for a general Christian rising throughout the Ottoman dominions in Europe. No Government was really prepared for the incalculable consequences that might follow, and the six Great Powers agreed to urge upon Constantinople the five Reforms of the famous Andrassy Note of December 30, 1875.¹ As the Turkish Government would offer its subjects nothing but the usual verbal securities, Austria, Russia, and Prussia, who as neighbours or quasi-neighbours had taken the initiative in 1875, passed on in May 1876 from the Andrassy Note to the Berlin Memorandum. Adhesion to this was, after some hesitation, declined by the British Government, presumably because it was held to be inadvisable to offer the Christian "rebels" the favourable terms there set out.

While the British Government was in the act of weighing its objections to the Berlin Memorandum, the Turkish authorities were taking their own measures to prevent the spread of rebellion among the Christians of Bulgaria. What, too, was to add fuel later to Radical fires was the fact that both Sir Henry Elliot, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, and Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, were at the time writing despatches tending to encourage Turkish brutality by showing that what Britain principally desired was an "immediate suppression" of "rebellious movements" in their "earlier stages." Thus was it hoped to deprive Vienna, Petersburg, and Berlin of the opportunity of undertaking interventions which Downing Street feared might become quasi-partitions. Some weeks, of course, passed before even hearsay accounts of the horrors which had been perpetrated

¹ Cf. Butler and Maccoby's *Development of International Law*, p. 464.

The Eastern Question, First Stage

upon the Christian population of Bulgaria reached the British public, but in the meantime the British Embassy at Constantinople and the British Foreign Office must already have seen good cause to begin rueful reflections.¹

The wider British public first learned something of what had been done from the *Daily News's* publication on June 23rd of a striking letter from its Constantinople correspondent.² But for weeks and even months afterwards Disraeli, helped by the Ministerial Press and by means which can hardly be described as straightforward,³ was doing his best to discount the "alleged atrocities," and even to insinuate that the Balkan Christians bore a larger share of the responsibility for what had happened than the Turkish Government. Such methods certainly took him to the end of the Session without having had to encounter a huge anti-Turkish storm endangering the Porte and hampering the traditional British policy of preserving the "integrity of the Ottoman dominions." But they only tended to make the wild outburst of popular rage the more uncontrollable when it transpired that the "alleged atrocities" had been more atrocious than the original allegations even in the eyes of a British official sent to the scene in the hopes of minimising the horrible newspaper accounts.⁴

The hundreds of protest meetings which began towards the end of August and continued throughout September seem to have been quite spontaneous and unpolitical in origin. Here is one report on the earlier stages of the "movement":⁵

¹ Sir Henry Elliot had written home on May 7th: "About 5,000 troops have been despatched from here; and I believe that no exertion should be spared for assuring the immediate suppression of a movement which, if allowed to spread, will become extremely serious." And on May 19th Lord Derby's despatch to Constantinople had actually complained of "the weakness and apathy of the Porte, in dealing with the insurrection in its earlier stages."

² It gave the names of thirty-seven ruined Bulgarian villages and some detailed atrocity accounts.

³ A fairly full "exposure" of the weaknesses of the Disraeli record will be found in the concluding chapter of T. P. O'Connor's *Lord Beaconsfield*.

⁴ Cf. *Beehive*, August 12th: "Among the scenes of fire and slaughter visited by Mr. Baring (the official investigator) was the town of Batok. . . . It had nine thousand living inhabitants, of whom but 1,200 remain alive. . . . Everywhere the eye meets with skulls and mutilated corpses, half-eaten by dogs. . . . In the school 200 women and children had been roasted alive; 7,000 bodies had been lying in the sun since May 12th. . . . The fiend who perpetrated all this, Achmed Aga, has received promotion. . . . These are what the First Minister of the tender-hearted Queen Victoria has the hardihood to style 'imaginary atrocities.' . . ."

⁵ *Ibid.*, September 9th. Cf. Henry Jephson's *The Platform*, ii, 483 sqq., for

The public demonstrations against the Turkish atrocities in Bulgaria and elsewhere, are, day by day, maintaining a unanimous character, and gradually assuming full national proportions. No meeting, perhaps, has been held at which the conduct of our Government has not been condemned as emphatically as the cruelty and abominable acts of the commissioned instruments of that of Turkey. . . . The recall of Sir Henry Elliot from the embassy is universally demanded: also compensation for the injured, to come, says Canon Liddon with general approval, out of the Treasury of the Porte, if it be not literally bankrupt. . . . Most frequently calls are made by unanimous resolution for the punishment of the perpetrators. . . . For these and other purposes, there is a prevailing opinion, that Parliament must, as soon as may be, be called together. . . .

But as this document already suggests, the protest meetings of August, September, and October 1876 could hardly, in view of the Ministerial record, avoid taking on an anti-Government and especially an anti-Disraeli tone. Moreover, as Radicals imposed upon themselves few of the conventional reticences inflicted upon more Orthodox Opposition politicians where "foreign policy" and "Imperial interests" were in question, Radical politicians tended to take the lead in forcing the pace of the agitation. At Birmingham, for example, they were calling in the middle of a "dangerous foreign crisis," not for the early summons of Parliament but for the General Election which might, in the circumstances, be expected to eject the Government.¹ It was Gladstone's special crime, indeed, in the eyes of Disraeli, now escaped from the Commons as Earl of Beaconsfield, that he considered himself free to plunge into the agitation with a white-hot pamphlet on *The Bulgarian Horrors* and to follow this up with a great constituency meeting in which he again virtually threw to the winds Downing Street's traditional policy of "the integrity of the Ottoman dominions."² It is, in fact, not hard to understand why Radical prayers to Gladstone began, urging him to

a chronological survey of movement which was gathering meetings in nine large towns on September 4th, meetings in seventeen towns on September 5th, and meetings in twenty towns on September 6th.

¹ *Beehive* article, September 30th, "Birmingham and Parliament."

² The pamphlet was more violent than the speech and contained the famous "bag and baggage" passage advocating "the extinction of the Turkish executive power in Bulgaria." By comparison the speech promising the Ottoman: "You shall receive your regular tribute, you shall retain your titular sovereignty, your empire shall not be invaded, but never again . . . shall the hand of violence be raised by you, never again shall the flood-gates of lust be open to you, never again shall the dire refinements of cruelty be devised by you" was somewhat less "irresponsible."

resume the Liberal leadership, and why Disraeli in an effort to stem the rising current spoke violently of the danger that "designing politicians" might take advantage of the "sublime" if mistaken sentiments of the public for "the furtherance of their sinister ends."¹

The situation, indeed, was thoroughly trying for the Prime Minister on more than one account. Just at the time when the Turks, after trampling down Bulgaria, had thoroughly defeated the intervening Serbs, just at the time, therefore, when British influence, if properly exerted, might reduce Ottoman-weakening suggestions of Balkan reconstruction to relatively modest limits, British "public opinion" was being "recklessly" urged forward to projects which, in Disraeli's view, were both visionary and dangerous.² To convert Turkey in Europe, for example, into a number of Slav states under the Sultan's suzerainty might merely be giving Russia the means of controlling the entire Turkish Empire and of threatening the British position in India from new directions. But fortunately for Disraeli a chance soon came to divide his opponents and to add to the upper-class dislike of abandoning traditional policy in the East, which was already on his side,³ the inveterate plebeian hatred of the "tyrannical" Russian Tsardom.

It was the Russian resolve rather to fight the Turks than to permit them to dictate a peace to the Serbs by which any part of Serbian self-government might be lost that first brought the possibilities of dangerous Anglo-Russian tension prominently forward. Though Disraeli in a much-criticised speech of September 20th had made some baleful criticisms of Serbian secret societies,⁴ the Russians knew that to allow the Turks to impose

¹ P. W. Clayden, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-6 for this Aylesbury speech of September 20th, and the continuation of its direct attack on Gladstone.

² Cf. *Beehive's* treatment on September 30th of a suggestion of a Balkan Confederation of Christians to replace the Turks.

³ Not, of course, always disinterestedly. There are ugly indications of Stock Exchange and newspaper influences being exerted on behalf of those who had bought up at low prices large parcels of depreciated Turkish Bonds—Bonds of which there was a total of about £165,000,000 on the markets. The influence of these Bonds, held mainly in England, should never be omitted from a survey of the political currents of the next two years.

⁴ "Serbia declared war upon Turkey. That is to say the secret societies of Europe declared war upon Turkey. I can assure you, gentlemen, that in the attempt to conduct the government of this world there are now elements to be considered which our predecessors had not to deal with. We have now to deal not merely with Emperors, with Princes. . . . There are the secret

such terms on the Serbs as the surrender of four fortresses to Turkish occupation and the abolition of the Serbian Militia was to surrender in advance all serious prospect of helping the Bulgarians and the rest of the Christians of European Turkey. Yet when John Bright in a speech to the Manchester Reform Club began the work of preparing British "public opinion" for non-intervention in the Russo-Turkish War which was becoming inevitable if anything adequate was to be accomplished for the Balkan Christians, even Radical organs jibbed sharply though they were still denouncing Turkish atrocities and Disraeli furiously. Here is an extract from a "Labour" paper which illustrates the position strikingly:¹

There can be no doubt that Mr. Bright is mistaken when he asserts that the people of Great Britain have discovered that our old ideas in regard to Russian aggression were foolish, unjust, and wicked . . . that they have "found out that the dread that Russia was going with her great military despotism to overshadow all Europe and to destroy constitutional government and freedom over the whole continent was a folly that no child should have listened to . . . that the idea that Russia is likely, . . . if she got possession of Constantinople, to be able to make her way to India and dethrone English power in that country was a phantom. . . ."

Have the English people really found this out? . . . There are two barbarisms to deal with, and the English Government as well as the English people, would do wrong if they encouraged or confided in the one rather than the other.

Encouraged and fortified by this apparent readiness of "the people" to be diverted from its course by anti-Russianism, Disraeli felt emboldened to make a really unpardonable public flourish at the customary Guildhall banquet of November 9th. The Tsar had just put a temporary end to Turkish assaults on the weakened Serbs by an ultimatum to Constantinople which had, nevertheless, only been sent out in company with the "most solemn" assurances to Britain that Russia, in pressing for a proper settlement of Balkan troubles, aimed at no conquest and no aggrandisement. Moreover the Tsar's own Government had taken the initiative in suggesting the holding of a Six-Power Conference at Constantinople in December with a set of English proposals societies . . . which have regular agents everywhere, which countenance assassination and which, if necessary, could produce a massacre." There is possibly here an attempt to convince the Russian Emperor that the Serbs had better be abandoned as the allies of Nihilism and Communism.

¹ *Beehive*, October 7th. See also the number for October 14th.

The Eastern Question, First Stage

as its agenda. For Disraeli, in these circumstances, to indulge in oratory as dangerously provocative to the Russians as it was encouraging to the Turks was almost madness.¹ Certainly he was made to pay dear for his:

England is the country above all others whose policy is Peace. We have nothing to gain by war. We are essentially a non-aggressive Power. There are no provinces that we desire to appropriate. We have built up an Empire of which we are proud, and our proudest boast is this—that that Empire subsists as much upon sympathy as upon force. But if the struggle comes, it should also be recollected that there is no country so prepared for war as England, because there is no country whose resources are so great. In a righteous cause, and I trust that England will never embark in war except in a righteous cause, a cause which concerns her liberty, her independence, or her Empire, England is not a country which will have need to inquire whether she can enter into a second or a third campaign. In a righteous cause England will commence a fight that will not end until right is done.

On the very next day a Moscow assembly heard the angry Tsar make an unflinching reply. A week after that a partial mobilisation was undertaken in Russia's Southern Provinces as a guarantee that the approaching Constantinople Conference would really do something effective for the Balkan Christians. Lord Salisbury, too, on his way to the Conference found the other Great Powers virtually agreed that the Tsar was in the right, and at home, in the meantime, another almost nation-wide anti-Disraeli movement was successfully launched with Gladstone at its head.

To read the violently anti-Disraelian oratory employed at the great conference on the foreign situation convened on December 8th,² to find it re-echoed through the country and thunderously

¹ In addition to the quoted passage there were others which the hostile T. P. O'Connor's *Beaconsfield* summarises thus: "He denounced, in most vehement terms, the conduct of the heroic principality of Serbia in entering upon a terribly unequal fight with the common oppressor of the Christian Slavs. He declared his firm intention to stand by the old policy of maintaining the independence and integrity of Turkey. . . ."

² Cf. Fawcett's speech in answer to a plea from Shaftesbury "to forget and forgive": "Forget and forgive! forget their want of moral courage; forget their want of statesmanlike capacity; forget that they did everything which they could do—and they would be doing it now if we had not checked them—to associate the name of England with the most abominable cruelties that ever disgraced Europe, and to associate her with the most detestable government that ever afflicted mankind? Forgive! There is one among them at least who ought never to be forgiven. And that Minister—I like to speak plainly—is the Prime Minister. When an English Minister comes forward and says that men who have rendered illustrious and never-to-be-forgotten services to their country have done things worse than these terrible crimes perpetrated by the Turk—you, Mr. Gladstone, may forgive it, but not we."

applauded by working-men Radicals bred to hatred of Russia, is to understand how much the Prime Minister had lost by his bellicose oratory of November 9th. Gladstone, indeed, found it possible to isolate him almost as a pariah in his own Cabinet in the following notable treatment of the Disraelian oration:

That speech was heard by Lord Salisbury. It was his privilege, or his doom, to hear it. It was not in his power to qualify or to contradict it. . . . But although Lord Salisbury could not qualify or contradict that speech, I think no one can doubt that the hearing of that speech must have been to him a painful operation. . . . We want to cut him adrift from that speech . . . we want him to go to Constantinople to represent the honour and not the dishonour of England. . . .

It becomes plain, in short, why at the Constantinople Conference Lord Salisbury was left free to get quite close to the position of his brother-delegates from the other Great Powers and even to show marked sympathy for the Russian thesis. More than that, when in January 1877 the Turkish Government declined the united proposals of the Conference for the future of its Christian subjects and offered instead its own "new beneficent Constitution," it grew increasingly obvious that the Cabinet majority would do no more for the Turks than gain them a little more time to bend to the wish of Europe. It seemed almost incredible that they should prefer a single-handed war with Russia.¹

All this "progress" on the Eastern Question was not accomplished without violent opposition from a strong section of "the Ministerial Press" which was often charged with acting as the agent of speculators in Turkish Bonds. If Lord Salisbury, once the idol of the ultra-Conservatives, was subjected to the bitter criticism of Tory organs² for his friendly relations at Constantinople with the Russian representative, General Ignatieff, the language employed about Gladstone may well be imagined. When, however, embittered Tories attempted to continue in Parliament

¹ Even Disraeli on February 20th in the Lords went so far as to say, when speaking of Lord Salisbury's Constantinople diplomacy: "He gave too much credit to the Turks for common sense, and he could not believe that when he made so admirable an arrangement in their favour they would have lost so happy an opportunity."

² *Hansard*, February 20th (Lords) for the Prime Minister on Lord Salisbury's plight: "He is supposed not to have the confidence of his colleagues because he seems to have been attacked in some newspapers generally supporting the Administration, and because his colleagues have not written leading articles in his defence."

The Eastern Question, First Stage

the attack on Gladstone's "inflammatory agitation" it only gave him the opportunity of making the remarkable and triumphant reply of February 16th.¹ He had already opened the Session by justifying the great popular agitation of the Autumn, and his own part in it, in words as stinging as the following:²

. . . in the present policy of Her Majesty's Government I now recognise, not all I could desire, not all that I could hope to see in the future, but certain great facts for which we formerly looked in vain. There is, in the first place, an acknowledgement of responsibility. We no longer hear that if ever there was a case for absolute non-interference it is the case of the Sultan and his subjects, as was said by Lord Beaconsfield. We do not now hear that we have no more to do with the quarrel between the Sultan and his subjects than we have to do with any other quarrel between a Sovereign and his people, as was said by Lord Derby. All this is a gain . . . thanks in no small degree to the despised Autumn agitation. . . .

In fact, thanks to Turkish obstinacy and to Russian caution, the Tsar was able to declare war on Turkey on April 24th in the virtual assurance that even his bitterest opponents in the British Cabinet would not venture to propose anything but a watchful neutrality. And when furious anti-Russian editorials in Tory newspapers induced suspicions³ that the newly ennobled Lord Beaconsfield might, after all, be meditating something dangerous despite the almost complete silence into which he had thought it wise to lapse, Gladstone felt confident enough to venture a counter-offensive. With the warm support of the Radical section of the Opposition and in spite of the hesitancy of the Opposition Front Bench, he was able to commit virtually the entire Liberal party in Parliament to the much-debated anti-Turkish Resolution of May 7th.⁴ He went farther. In his anxiety to make it impossible for the Government to attempt anything serious for the Turk, he consented, in exchange for an oppor-

¹ The passage beginning with "We have, I think, the most solemn and the greatest question to determine that has come before Parliament in my time" made apparently a special impression.

² Quoted in Clayden's *Beaconsfield*, p. 181.

³ Cf. *The Times*, May 5th, for a letter from the great Carlyle: "A rumour everywhere prevails that our miraculous Premier, in spite of his Queen's Proclamation of Neutrality, intends, under cover of 'care for British interests,' to send the English fleet to the Baltic, or do some other feat which shall compel Russia to declare war against England. Latterly the rumour has shifted from the Baltic and become still more sinister, on the eastern side of the scene. . . ."

⁴ Morley's *Gladstone* and Fitzmaurice's *Granville* taken together permit a fairly full view of the position.

tunity to address a great gathering of delegates of the more "advanced" Liberal Associations, to give his blessing to Joseph Chamberlain's ambitious plan of welding them into a National Liberal Federation under Radical control.¹

In many ways the successful construction of this National Liberal Federation on May 31st is the most important event in the domestic politics of 1877. The Sessional record of Parliament was not, of course, devoid of interest. The Prisons Act was a significant piece of legislation;² the Radicals felt they were making some progress with the Burials Bill and County Franchise Extension; and even the detection of the Prime Minister and Lord Salisbury in alleged "jobs" gave the party politicians some stimulating occupation. But only the commencement of Irish obstruction, evoked by a South Africa Bill confirming the Government's "unjust" annexation of the Transvaal, proved as epoch-making in the history of British party politics as the foundation of the National Liberal Federation. The engineer constructor of the new political machine was Joseph Chamberlain. Even before entering Parliament in June 1876 he had acquired a national reputation both for his exceedingly able local administration as "Republican Mayor of Birmingham" and for the pertinacious Radical fight on the Education Question which he had waged against two Governments in turn with the National Education League. By 1876 the League's agitation had forced even the Tory Government to accept the principle of universal compulsory education and had given it, too, a fierce bout of wearing opposition in the concluding stages of the Parliamentary Session because even in the act of "conceding" "indirect compulsion" the Tories had been unable to refrain from hampering the School Boards.³

¹ Fitzmaurice's *Granville*, ii, 171-2, shows the Liberal Leader in the Lords vainly warning Gladstone against Chamberlain's designs.

² In that the local jails, hitherto under the exclusive control of the Justices, were now brought into a national system of penal administration controlled by the Prison Commissioners. Nearly all the objections made to the Bill were by Tories who, while asking for prison costs to be taken off the rates and put on the taxes, were nevertheless reluctant to surrender "local control" by the Justices.

³ *Beehive*, July 8th, for the National Conference of June 19th, and the deputation which later went with its protests to the Education Office. But a much hotter resistance arose after the Government, to balance the ill-will caused in the Tory ranks by its "progressive" policy, made the Tories some concessions intended to be helpful to real "religious education" and adverse to the "secularising" School Board cause. (Cf. Buckle's *Disraeli*, v, 483-5, for the "agitating and anxious" time which the Government was given at the end of July and the beginning of August.)

The Eastern Question, First Stage

But after these achievements Chamberlain determined that the time had come to wind up the League and construct in its place something wider. It was probably true that the continuous Education agitation of 1869-76 was beginning to weary an originally sympathetic part of the "public," and certainly the great London School Board itself was temporarily on the defensive.¹ In these circumstances there was much to justify the view that Chamberlain began to press upon his originally reluctant fellow-Leaguers, the view that a wider-based body with a programme covering the whole field of politics instead of merely one part of it might now be able to do more even for the League's specific "Education Question" than the League itself. The "Education Question" proper, it should be remembered, made no real appeal to many working-class parents. To them Education Acts often meant little more than a vast and unwelcome diminution in the opportunities of sending children out to "earn their keep," a troublesome and sometimes impossible struggle to find the "school pence" and, perhaps, an occasional visit, at once irritating and alarming, from a School Board "truant officer." To put the Education Question, therefore, on a list with other Radical causes, more attractive to the average working man, was no such bad political strategy.

In February 1877, then, Chamberlain was announcing to the Education League's supporters throughout the country the approaching dissolution of its organisation, but the formation, at the same time and under the same leadership, of a Federation of Liberal Associations. It was obvious, of course, that the immediate appeal of the new Federation would be to the "more advanced" Liberal Associations. But there was good ground for expecting that most of these would willingly put themselves into alliance with the famous Birmingham Liberal Association for the purpose of founding a Federation capable of vitalising Opposition Leadership in Parliament into something more than "moderate Liberalism." For one thing, the efficiency of the Birmingham

¹ Cf. *A Defence of the London School Board* for the following charges to which replies are furnished: (*Beehive*, July 29, 1876): "It is said the Board has been guilty of great extravagance in School Buildings. . . . It is said the Board manages its schools extravagantly. . . . It is said the Board has built for too many children. . . . It is said the Board is emptying the Voluntary Schools. . . . It is said the Board has not got hold of the ignorant. . . . It is said the Board has not got hold of destitute and neglected children. . . . It is said the Board has been both wasteful and harsh in the enforcement of the Bye-Laws (21,000 truant prosecutions). It is said the Board Schools give a Godless Education. . . ."

party organisation had long made Birmingham a sort of "advanced Liberal" Mecca. How Birmingham's efficiency had been built up and what consequences followed for the Liberal National Federation—this is a story worth telling at some little length.¹

Birmingham's "advanced Liberalism" had first been "driven" to undertake the construction of the finest election organisation in the country by indignation against that part of the "Reform Bill" of 1867 which, it was alleged, not only left the town greatly under-represented with three members, but even attempted to rob "advanced Liberalism" of one of these by claiming it for "minority representation." At the election of 1868, therefore, "advanced Liberal" voters had first been carefully numbered, ward by ward, and then drilled by ward committees to avoid the "trap" set by the Reform Bill's only allowing them two votes but three members. To defeat the expectation that the bulk of "advanced Liberalism" would throw all its votes for its two most popular candidates and so allow the "moderates" to capture the third seat, the wards voted only for the differing lists of two names sent to them by the Liberal Association's Central Executive after a careful plotting-out of the electoral ground. The device proved very successful and three Radical candidates were safely returned for the three Birmingham seats. Soon the famous "Caucus" machinery of ward meetings, ward committees, the Six Hundred, the Central Executive, and the supreme Management Committee was enlisting the energy of all the active "advanced Liberalism" in the town and undertaking further tasks. The problem of capturing a reliable School majority in the face of a "cumulative vote" lending itself to the counter-manceuvres of the "religious education" party proved a difficult one, but was solved in November 1873 when a School Board was elected which chose Chamberlain as its Chairman. Almost at the same time an efficient Town Council majority was secured which made Chamberlain Mayor and supported him steadily through the famous two and a half years that may almost be said to have inaugurated in England what the Fabians were later to call "municipal" or "gas and water socialism."²

The careful organisation and complicated calculations needed

¹ The story has often been told, most notably, perhaps, by the hostile Ostrogorski in his *Democracy and the Organisation of Political Parties*.

² Garvin's *Chamberlain*, i, 185-214, tells the story well.

The Eastern Question, First Stage

to capture the Birmingham School Board from the combined "religious education" majority originally issuing from the "cumulative vote" had largely been the work of Schnadhorst, the political organiser who was later to become a national figure. As the great results, which could be achieved from such careful preparatory work, became obvious in Birmingham the desire to work closely with the Birmingham Association and to imitate its machinery spread among many of the "more advanced" Liberal Associations of other places. Of the co-operation of such Associations in the foundation of his projected Federation Chamberlain could be relatively sure especially after such a time of tempestuous popular agitation as the winter of 1876. But, as has been seen, Chamberlain tried to spread his net wider by providing the attraction of the presence of Gladstone himself at the foundation conference of May 31st. He was successful. Nearly a hundred Associations sent delegates, a Federation was determined on, and despite his venturing to urge such an "extreme" policy as "Free Church, Free Schools, and Free Land," Chamberlain was chosen as President and some of his closest allies were put into the Executive Committee.¹

It was not long before the "new Radical move" was affecting politics to such an extent that as early as July 1878 *The Times* thought fit to assert that "the policy of the Midland capital will bring upon us the 'Caucus' with all its evils."² In point of fact the Radical inner ring of the Federation was already undertaking a pressure on the Liberal Front Bench³ intended to force it forward or to force it out. More than that, a growing number of the Liberal Associations affiliated to the Federation were being encouraged to adopt the full "Birmingham model" organisation.⁴ As a result more and more members of the Liberal Parliamentary party were to find themselves uneasily facing "Two

¹ Garvin's *Chamberlain*, i, 260.

² *Ibid.*, i, 262.

³ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, April 6, 1878, for one of the methods employed: "A deputation representing about 120 of the Liberal associations . . . had an interview . . . with Lord Granville and the Marquis of Hartington. . . . Previous to the arrival of the noble Lords a preliminary meeting was held, at which Mr. Chamberlain, M.P., was voted to the chair. . . . Upon the arrival of Earl Granville and Lord Hartington the deputation was introduced by Mr. Bright, M.P., and short addresses were delivered by that gentleman; Mr. Harris, of Birmingham; Mr. Robert Leake, of Manchester; Mr. J. F. White, of Aberdeen; and the Rev. Dr. Mellor of Halifax. . . ."

⁴ *Ibid.*, January 12, 1878, for Schnadhorst lecturing to the Cambridge Association with the two Liberal candidates present.

Hundreds," "Three Hundreds," "Four Hundreds," and "Five Hundreds" built up on the same ward basis as Birmingham's already famous "Six Hundred." These gatherings were apt to prove much more troublesome to Liberal members and candidates with tendencies to "moderation" than any muster held under the previous order of Liberal Associations. For one thing, a meeting, say of a "Two Hundred" or a "Three Hundred," might claim on every principle of democratic logic to be so completely representative of the local party as to be entitled to give its M.P. or M.P.s much fuller political directions than any assembly previously gathered by the old-style Liberal Association. For another, experience speedily proved that the ward meetings, which were the very foundation of the new style Liberal Associations, were so dominated by "active politicians," almost always Radical, that that muster of all the ward representatives, which made up the "Two," "Three," "Four," or "Five Hundred," invariably adopted "extreme" views most distasteful to "moderate Liberals." Nothing could apparently have suited Chamberlain's plans better.

THE EASTERN QUESTION, BEACONSFIELD'S TRIUMPH

"There is no member of this House, who, by training, instincts, and convictions is more anti-Tory than I am . . . but I will trust my own countrymen, whatever their politics, before the statesmen of either Russia or Germany . . . there is a ring of Christian Pashas at St. Petersburg as corrupt and cruel as the ring of Mahomedan Pashas at Constantinople. . . . They have the ferocity of barbarism with the duplicity of civilisation. Their first word is gold, the second the sword, the third Siberia. Bribery, bayonets, banishment are the triple pillars upon which their politico-military-ecclesiastical system stands . . . and I cannot regard this handing over of two-thirds or three-fourths of the continent of Europe to an aggressive, military, ecclesiastical autocracy, otherwise than as dangerous to human freedom, peace and civil progress. . . ."

The anti-Russian Radical, JOSEPH COWEN, "lets out" to the delight of the Tories. (*House of Commons*, February 11, 1878.)

"When the friends of sense, justice, and peace endeavoured to arrest the threatening catastrophe, Rowdyism was proclaimed king. The bibulous patron of the music hall, the unfledged medical student, the whole mass of ignorance, ruffianism, and folly, broke down any attempt of intelligence, or honesty, or humanity to make itself heard. Authority, meantime, looked on and applauded. When a wretched fellow in a music hall sang his more wretched rhymes, the highest authority in the realm was advised to send him a letter of congratulation on his patriotic verses. When a mob assailed a body of peaceful citizens of London in expressing their opinions, the ringleader was a Lord Mayor. . . . Every bad national passion that can lie concealed in the heart of a nation was roused to fury. . . . On this foul tide the barque of Lord Beaconsfield's fortunes floated with all sails set, triumphantly, proudly. . . ."

T. P. O'CONNOR'S *hostile description of Jingoism in 1878*. (*From his contemporary "Life of Beaconsfield."*)

"When . . . the bell announced the approach of the train, the whole station, from the crimson gallery, crowded with rank and fashion, to the farthest platform . . . and to the highest hotel window, with its row of heads, woke up to demonstrative life. People did not say to one another, referring to

the train, 'Here she comes!' . . . The remark was, 'Here *he* comes!' . . . As the train glided alongside the crimson platform, every eye searched for *him*. . . . Men started up, hat in hand, and pushed their way among the gathering, shouting mass on the platform, anxious for a near view of the noble Earl. . . . The multitude outside gave voice together, and swallowed up the stream of cheers on which floated into their sight the hero of the Berlin Peace."

The "Daily Telegraph" reports Beaconsfield's return from Berlin (July 17th).

TO read the newspapers of the year 1877 is to become aware not only of the eager and detailed interest with which the great Turco-Russian military clash in Europe and Asia was followed but also of the way in which it tended to dwarf British domestic issues. During the spring, it is true, the Russians found the unusually wintry weather a serious obstacle to the progress of their columns towards the Danube even though their road was through the allied principality of Rumania. In the temporary absence, therefore, of the more absorbing types of war news there was still the opportunity of developing a fair amount of "agitation" on Radical issues. Thus the Dissenters' long Burials Bill campaign to secure for their ministers and their services entry into the parish churchyards may be held to have progressed a considerable stage. But though the Session of 1877 was to reveal both Archbishops anxious to abate the Dissenting ardour for Disestablishment by offering "concessions" on the churchyard question, the Government Bill that was proposed on Anglican behalf inevitably fell short of the need. Instead of the frank throwing-open of the parish churchyards necessary to abate the embitterment caused by the long and obstinate controversy, all that was offered to those who objected to Anglican funeral rites was burial in silence in the churchyard or the legal possibility in most localities of forcing the "public provision" of a second burial ground not under Church control. It is significant of the acute and dangerous irritation known to have been bred among Dissenters by a long series of painful Burial "scan-

The Eastern Question, Beaconsfield's Triumph

dals"¹ that a pro-Dissenter amendment should actually have been carried against the Government in the Lords.² It caused Ministers to abandon the Bill for the Session and, as events turned out, for ever.³

The other Radical cause which showed conspicuous vitality even in the midst of the war excitements of 1877 was the "assimilation of the county and borough franchise." The most picturesque and effective of the demonstrations prepared in advance of the Sessional debate on the subject was, perhaps, the Exeter Hall Conference of May 16th, when John Bright headed a platform of 30 M.P.s, and 2,500 representatives of unenfranchised county householders, most of them farm labourers, demanded the vote.⁴ The distinguished speakers both at this daytime Conference and the ensuing and more crowded evening demonstration when Joseph Cowen presided over an assembly, swollen by the thousands who arrived after work to demonstrate their sympathy with their unenfranchised country brothers, could all stress the point made by John Morley the day before to the Council of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union. Till they possessed the vote, farm labourers and the rest of the unenfranchised would, in spite of the recent currents of remedial social legislation, be condemned to conditions worse in some respects than those of their forebears a century back. On June 29, 1877, then, Mr. Trevelyan's annual motion on behalf of the unenfranchised householders of the county divisions won a Commons vote of 220-276, a veritable triumph after the votes of 165-264, 166-268, and 173-287 obtained in previous Sessions of the Parliament elected in 1874.

War news, however, was now beginning to overshadow other subjects, the Russians having effected successful passages of the Danube with what were in the circumstances inconsiderable losses. For the greater part of July it seemed that, though the Turks

¹ Cf. *Beehive*, March 4, 1876, for the last two serious "scandals." In one case a long series of appeals had been necessary before an Anglican cleric could be forced to admit into the churchyard a child's tombstone on which her father, a Methodist minister, was described as "Rev." In another case the incumbent had desired to impose derogatory conditions on the burial of a Baptist infant.

² *Hansard*, June 18th (Lords) for Lord Harrowby's successful amendment and the Division of 127-111 against the Government.

³ Part of the Government's trouble was the declaration of 12,000 clergy against the amendment which otherwise might have been accepted despite the possibilities it opened for the "desecration" of the churchyard by "unseemly" and possibly "infidel" rites.

⁴ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, May 19, 1877, and the National Reform Union's pamphlet, *Speeches on the County Franchise* by G. O. Trevelyan (1877), p. 39.

might have had some temporary success in resisting formidable Russian attacks in the distant Armenian theatre, the same would hardly hold true of Bulgaria where the Russian attack opened with great dash and success. Indeed, those Ministers who had already been engaged in countering the wilder fears of their own Tory alarmists¹ might early have been placed in serious difficulties had it not been for Osman Pasha's remarkable victory at Plevna late in July. But after Osman Pasha's successful stand in Western Bulgaria and contemporaneous Turkish successes against Russian units which had been pushed over boldly southwards, Ministers seemed to have little immediate cause for concern. By the end of August, certainly, even the Tory alarmists were growing somewhat more assured while during September, with Plevna making such large demands on Russian resources that the Turks assumed the offensive elsewhere, it began to be widely assumed that the chances of a decisive Russian victory might well be over.

The "Russian peril" still seemed remote during October when very bloody repulses were inflicted upon the Russians and Rumanians attacking Plevna and when the approaching Balkan winter added further to St. Petersburg's anxieties. But the course of November was to prove that British observers had been somewhat complacently under-rating² the effect of the great and even desperate efforts that were now being put forward by the Russian Government. After dangerous defeats had been inflicted on the Turkish forces defending Armenia, the Russian armies of Bulgaria succeeded, in their turn, first in completely closing Plevna to supplies and then in winning sufficient ground in mid-Bulgaria to threaten the Turkish positions further south in Eastern Rumelia and even in Adrianople. On December 10th the fall of

¹ Cf. *Hansard*, June 11th (Lords) for Salisbury's reply to Lord de Mauley's fears for India: "... in discussions of this kind a great deal of apprehension arises from the popular use of maps on too small a scale. As with such maps you are able to put a thumb on India, and a finger on Russia, some persons at once think that the political situation is alarming, and that India must be looked to." Salisbury was even more jocular that night at a City dinner: "I have a colonial friend," he said, "who is ... in a very anxious state in connexion with the Cape of Good Hope. He pointed out to me that Russia was in Armenia, that Armenia is the key to Syria, that Syria is the key to Egypt, and that any one advancing into Egypt has the key to Africa."

² Both the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly Review* numbers for October 1877 were very pessimistic as to Russian success. Even when the tide had begun to turn, Lord Beaconsfield's speech at the annual Guildhall Banquet seems to show the Government was hardly aware of the possibilities of a complete Turkish collapse after Plevna should have fallen.

The Eastern Question, Beaconsfield's Triumph

Plevna increased the peril of the Turks. Very large Russian forces, hitherto detained by Osman's skilful defence, were released for operations against the inferior Turkish generals and armies barring the road to Adrianople and Constantinople.

The new war position had almost immediate repercussions on the political situation in England. The pressure for intervention from the considerable pro-Turkish section of Conservative politicians and journalists at once grew greater, and on December 19th it was announced that Parliament would re-assemble on January 17th, some three weeks before the then normal time. So freely, too, was it assumed that the early meeting of Parliament portended armed intervention that the mere announcement caused some very heavy falls on the Stock Exchange. Meanwhile, pending the meeting of Parliament, most of the "advanced Liberalism" of the country attempted to provoke as formidable an agitation against the expected pro-Turkish intervention of the Ministry as had been called out against the Ministry's behaviour on the "Bulgarian atrocities."

Formidable as were some of "advanced Liberalism's" demonstrations in favour of continued neutrality, vigorous as was some of the language employed by its M.P.s, it very soon became plain that there was going to be a much stronger popular current of opposition to contend with than there had been in 1876. For one thing, the "peril" of a Russian appearance on the shores of the Mediterranean, and even at Constantinople, was now actual and immediate instead of potential and relatively remote, and the alarmists naturally had a very much more favourable field of action. Again, there should be no under-rating of the amount of sentimental "good will" that had been won for the Turks by Osman Pasha's gallant resistance at Plevna and by the constant picturing of the illustrated papers which showed Turks to be at least as disciplined and civilised as Greeks and Bulgarians.¹

The first proof, perhaps, that there was going to be a greater struggle for the ear of the "millions" than there had been in

¹ Cf. the irate P. W. Clayden, *op. cit.*, p. 234, on the pro-Turks: "If the Turks won a victory, they were represented as deserving our help; if they incurred a defeat, public compassion was appealed to and England was urged to fly to the rescue of a great civilisation and a noble race. Osman Pasha's gallant defence at Plevna was held to have condoned the offences of the Turkish Government against humanity, and echoes of the old laughter at 'imaginary' horrors in Bulgaria were heard again. The zeal of Islam had eaten the *Daily Telegraph* up. . . ."

1876 came on December 30th in Trafalgar Square. There a meeting to condemn Britain's being drawn into the war found itself facing another protesting against Russian aggression, and the result was violence and confusion.¹ As the Session, too, drew nearer "advanced Liberals" did not have the pre-Sessional oratorical field to themselves. Numbers of Conservative members were now no longer afraid to voice praise of the Beaconsfield Government and its readiness to defend British interests by force if necessary.²

Meanwhile a struggle seems to have been going on inside the Cabinet between the moderates and the "anti-Russians" as to the proposals with which to face Parliament. Just as the decision to call Parliament on January 17th, and not even earlier, had been a compromise between the Beaconsfield party, anxious to take a strong line, and the Carnarvon-Derby-Salisbury party, convinced that all legitimate British interests could be defended without recourse to dangerous heroics, so a pacific Queen's Speech forecasting the possibility of a Vote of Credit for special "measures of precaution," but not requiring it immediately, was a similar compromise.³ But events were moving fast in the Balkans, where the increasing demoralisation of the Turks was permitting rapid Russian progress, progress which Layard, now British Ambassador at Constantinople, allowed himself to magnify by transmitting unverified rumours in his telegrams home. It was on the basis of Layard's alarmist telegrams that a Cabinet majority resolved to order the Fleet to Constantinople and to ask Parliament for a six millions Vote of Credit immediately, while it was dissent from these resolutions which induced Lords Derby and Carnarvon to resign. Derby's return to the Foreign Office was, indeed, secured by the offer to countermand the order to the Fleet, but Balkan news continued such that even the mild Sir Stafford Northcote, Disraeli's successor as Leader of the Commons, permitted himself strong criticism of Russia's peace conditions when on January 28th he moved the Vote of Credit.

Conservative objection to Russian courses grew no weaker when

¹ *Illustrated London News*, January 5, 1878.

² *Ibid.*, January 12th, for speeches by the Tory members for South Leicestershire.

³ This seems the best conclusion to make from the considerable controversy which developed after the retirement from the Cabinet first of Lord Carnarvon and then of Lord Derby.

The Eastern Question, Beaconsfield's Triumph

it was revealed that anti-Russianism of a formidable kind was now at length mobilisable, even if after sometimes dubious preliminaries,¹ against "advanced Liberalism's" efforts out of doors. Thus a City meeting of January 31st, called originally to protest against the Vote of Credit, was converted into a meeting approving it and sending a deputation to Parliament to report the fact. On February 3rd, again, a Manchester meeting of 20,000 enthusiastically approved the Government's course² and on February 4th another big pro-Government and anti-Russian demonstration took place in Bristol. Then on February 6th, after more excitement, a great and successful meeting in favour of the Government was held in Exeter Hall³ and next day there was another in Trafalgar Square.

Meanwhile the Commons Debate and the stream of alarmist telegrams from the Constantinople Embassy continued. Finally on February 7th an Embassy Report that the Russians, in spite of an armistice already signed with the Turks, had advanced to within thirty miles of Constantinople and had insisted on the evacuation of the last Turkish lines in front of the capital, produced both a panic in the City and the Opposition Front Bench's resolve to abandon further opposition to the Vote of Credit. This resolve was persisted in by the Liberal leader, Lord Hartington, even though a strong Russian denial was forthcoming which induced "advanced Liberalism" to persist in opposition and to raise first a Division of 96-295⁴ and then, after the despatch of the Fleet to the Dardanelles, one of 124-328.⁵

Throughout the months of February and March 1878 anti-Russian excitement continued to reign high. First, for example, there was the irritant of the reported Russian demand for the

¹ Cf. Clayden, *op. cit.*, for Sir Charles Dilke in the Commons offering information on how the City anti-Government meeting had been broken up: "He could supply the names and addresses of those who organised the disturbance, and of the workmen from Woolwich Arsenal who committed it, to whom their railway fares and a gratuity were given, who afterwards went to the Guildhall and who then returned to Woolwich and disturbed a meeting there."

² Cf. *Illustrated London News*, February 9, 1878. This was the meeting at which great play was made with an effigy of Gladstone bearing the inscription, "Gladstone, England's Traitor."

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, February 9th.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, February 16th. As the Fleet was sent without Turkish permission and, indeed, against a formal Turkish protest, the Russians, for a brief space, thought of countering by an occupation of Constantinople. The occupation would have been on the same ostensible ground taken by the British, "the protection of life and property."

Turkish Navy at the Russo-Turkish Peace Conference of San Stefano.¹ It was a demand which could be made to wear a very sinister appearance in England and the Russians did well to abandon it, even at the cost of resigning what they claimed was their most convenient way for taking part of their war indemnity. Then there was the further irritation caused by the anti-British atmosphere that was reported to be reigning both among the Russian and Turkish negotiators at San Stefano. There seemed, indeed, at time a disquieting prospect that the Turks might willingly accept the Russian terms² and stand by them afterwards at the projected European Congress to sanction the new aspect of affairs in the Balkans. Their inducement, according to rumour, would be a proffered Russian alliance guaranteeing them for ever in their remaining provinces. This alliance the Russians were deemed ready to offer in order to strengthen their hands against England, and the Turks to accept, because they now had greater faith in Russian promises than in those of the "selfish" and bitterly divided Britain which thanks to Gladstone's "unscrupulous agitation" had deserted them.

Even before the outburst of public dissatisfaction, then, which greeted the detailed terms of San Stefano when they at length arrived in London on March 22nd, it is hardly surprising to find that "advanced Liberalism's" continued efforts against the Government were no longer meeting with the old success. For example, the Hyde Park anti-Turkish meeting of Sunday, February 24th, was broken up³ when members of a rival pro-Turkish demonstration, after passing resolutions in support of Lord Beaconsfield's "patriotic determination to uphold the interests and the honour of the British Empire," bore down on them with bands playing and banners flying. More than this, the anti-Russian victors passed on to demonstrate in the West End, to cheer at Downing Street and the Turkish Embassy, and to break Mr. Gladstone's windows.⁴ "The National and Patriotic League," again, had a great success on Tuesday, March 5th, when it filled Exeter Hall with a "very enthusiastic" assembly whose protests against

¹ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, March 2nd and 9th.

² The *Daily News* had reported the Turkish Foreign Minister as saying: "I have hitherto been a partisan of England and the English alliance. . . . I now abandon the English alliance. I no longer believe in English policy, in the English Government, nor in the English people. I accept the Russian policy and alliance, and am now a partisan of that Power" (February 7th).

³ *Illustrated London News*, March 2nd.

⁴ *Ibid.*, March 2, 1878.

The Eastern Question, Beaconsfield's Triumph

a Russian occupation of Constantinople or the dismemberment of Turkey were headed by the Lord Mayor.¹ Even Bradlaugh's enormous influence with working-class London failed to turn the scale. He summoned his followers to Hyde Park on Sunday, March 10th, there to restore the right of "free speech" annihilated, it was claimed, of late by the war party's use of gangs of organised roughs. But the result was not conspicuously successful. According to one account of the proceedings "they were disorderly in the extreme" and "nine persons, mostly roughs, were treated . . . for broken heads and fractured arms and on Monday several refractory ones made their appearance at Marlborough Street Police Court."²

It was the feeling that the "millions" were at last with them that induced the Cabinet majority rather to accept the Foreign Secretary's resignation than weaken the measures with which it was thought fit to meet the receipt of the full text of the San Stefano Treaty. On March 27th the second Cabinet resignation of the year accompanied the Government's rejection of the San Stefano terms and its decision to call out the Reserves in order to leave Russia under no illusions as to the gravity of the situation. Two other critical decisions were come to at the same time, though these were not at once made public. An Indian contingent was summoned to the Mediterranean and its commanders were authorised to occupy Cyprus and possibly more. There followed a few weeks during which war seemed very near and all the doubts of "moderate Liberalism" and all the opposition of "advanced Liberalism" unlikely to stop it. Here is a moderate Liberal view of the position on April 6th even before the "public" was aware of the Indian and Cyprus decisions:³

Down the slope towards War—that is a brief summary of the proceedings of the week, so far as the British Government is concerned. . . . Military and naval preparations for War are being pushed forward with almost incredible haste. New Ironclads are being purchased, new monster guns are being ordered. The warlike passions of the population are being roused. What is going on in Great Britain is, naturally enough, echoed in Russia. We have already passed the region of discussion to that of menace, and on both sides an incontrollable force of popular opinion and sentiment is being generated which threatens presently to get beyond the management of calm statesmanship. . . . There would seem to be no prospect of a European Congress. . . .

¹ *Illustrated London News*, March 9th.

² *Ibid.*, March 16th.

³ *Ibid.*, April 6th.

Actually the position was not quite so grave as both "moderate" and "advanced" Liberalism were inclined to fear. The new Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, might in his opening Circular to British representatives abroad have trenchantly criticised all the leading terms of San Stefano, but neither he nor the moderate section of the Cabinet was inclined to hold out for a revision so complete as to "force" the Tsar to accept war rather than "humiliation." Moreover, the delayed revelation of two of the Cabinet projects, which had caused Lord Derby's resignation, brought about a certain revulsion of feeling that was to hearten "advanced Liberalism" to renewed efforts of opposition. It was on April 17th that Calcutta telegrams revealed that the Indian Government had received a quite unprecedented order for the despatch of an expeditionary force of 7,000 or 8,000 men to the Mediterranean.¹ There was naturally considerable danger that this step might precipitate the very war that it was intended to avert, and there were, besides, considerable doubts as to the constitutional propriety of the Government's whole course of action. For one thing, Parliament had just been allowed to undertake a three weeks' Easter adjournment without receiving the slightest hint of what had been prepared.²

On April 29th, accordingly, Gladstone may again be found strongly criticising the Government in a message of encouragement to a "Working Men's Peace Conference" at Liverpool.³ On April 30th there was both an assembly of 1,500 anti-war delegates at Manchester, with an "immense public meeting" in the evening addressed by John Bright, and a very similar gathering at Birmingham addressed by Chamberlain.⁴ Such things had their effect, and so did the simultaneous signing of a huge "National Declaration" against the Government's over-readiness for war on behalf of the Turks.⁵ The private conferences between Lord Salisbury and the Russian Ambassador must certainly have been assisted towards a friendlier note permitting the Russian's departure post-haste for St. Petersburg with the British terms of accommodation. A Congress of the signatories of the Near Eastern Settlement of 1856 was called for, empowered to make large but not impossible revisions of the San Stefano terms in favour of the Turks.

¹ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, April 20th.

² Cf. *Ibid.*, April 27th.

³ Clayden, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

⁴ *Illustrated London News*, May 4th.

⁵ Cf. Clayden, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

The Eastern Question, Beaconsfield's Triumph

During the anxious weeks that ensued, the Parliamentary Opposition undertook a major demonstration in both Houses on May 20th. It had no direct bearing on the actual Anglo-Russian situation, but was intended to display to the country how recklessly the Government had ignored all manner of grave constitutional objections in the desire to achieve cheap and dangerous theatrical effects by a surprise summons of Indian troops to Europe. A distinct impression appears to have been made on "public opinion,"¹ and again the negotiations with Russia, reopened by the Ambassador on May 23rd after his return from St. Petersburg, seem to have benefited. On May 27th *The Times* was already forecasting a favourable result, and on May 30th a definitive "Secret Agreement" was signed committing both parties in regard to their action at the forthcoming Berlin Congress. Though all the essentials of the final settlement of the Near East were now fixed, the general public, of course, did not understand this. Indeed, the Government was to gain much from the universal relief which accompanied the Congress preparations and even more from the unexpectedly smooth and easy way in which the Congress business seemed to flow. In a sense the ensuing explosions of joy merely indicated the "uninformed public's" profound ignorance of the procedure of international negotiation. Many believed that Lord Beaconsfield's presence² at Berlin had ensured the "diplomatic rout of Russia" and the British acquisition of Cyprus.

The successful issue of the Congress of Berlin vastly strengthened the Government's political position. There was ample and speedy proof of this both in the great reception accorded to Lords Beaconsfield and Salisbury on their return from Berlin and in the brilliant assembly which on July 18th crowded into the House of Lords to hear the Prime Minister's own account of the Congress and the settlement. But these triumphs were capped when, early in the morning of August 3rd, the Commons debate on Opposition resolutions of criticism ended with the striking Government success of a Division of 338-143. Never had the Opposition,

¹ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, May 25th: "One effect . . . will probably be to inspire greater caution in succeeding Governments as to the introduction of novelties opposed to Constitutional traditions."

² It was a belief inevitably stimulated by the great stream of messages from Berlin, sent by the special correspondents of the newspapers, and the numerous pictures which appeared in the illustrated papers, showing Disraeli addressing the Congress in Session, or chatting privately with the Russian negotiators, or even leaving his hotel to take part in a Congress sitting.

both "moderate" and "advanced,"¹ seemed so powerless and so discredited. For a space the "country" seemed prepared not only to accept Ministerial assurances that Turkey had been saved and Russia checked, but to believe that, now that war and rumours of war were over, peace and prosperity would return to a country which had been suffering from a continuous and deepening trade depression since 1874. Ministerialists, indeed, affected firm confidence that the normal pace of recovery might be sensibly accelerated by their acquisition of Cyprus and the alleged "great experiment England was about to undertake in Asia Minor."² There was only a minority even of the Opposition itself—a minority, of course, mainly from the "advanced" camp—in whom any great echo seems to have been awakened by Gladstone's forceful criticism of what had been done to get possession of Cyprus. "You have undertaken," Gladstone had said,³ "to go two thousand miles from your own country, alone and single-handed, in order to prevent Russia from making war at any time upon Turkey in Asia. . . . Besides that, you have undertaken to see to the good government of what is, perhaps, the worst governed country in the whole world. . . . I think it is an insane convention." Yet the Prime Minister had felt confident enough of "public opinion" to venture the following brutal counter-attack:⁴

. . . I do not pretend to be as competent a judge of insanity as the right hon. gentleman. . . . I would put this issue to an intelligent English jury: Which do you believe most likely to enter into an insane Convention, a body of English gentlemen honoured by the favour of their sovereign and the confidence of their fellow-subjects, managing your affairs for five years, I hope with prudence and not altogether without success, or a sophisticated rhetorician, intoxicated with the exuberance

¹ The Government had actually been greatly helped by one important Radical's anti-Russianism leading him to give hearty support to Disraeli's diplomatic courses. Joseph Cowen, too, was not the only "advanced" personage of whose support much could be made. That aged and erratic political notability, J. A. Roebuck, also threw his weight into the scale on the Government's behalf.

² Cf. the disgusted Clayden, *op. cit.*, p. 290, on the pro-Beaconsfield's Press's reception of the Anglo-Turkish Convention by which Turkey had consented to allow a British occupation of Cyprus in return for the guarantee of armed British support against further Russian aggression on Asiatic Turkey: "Fabulous accounts were published of the beauty of Cyprus and the undeveloped wealth of Asia Minor where a new opening for British capital, British enterprise, and even British emigration was proclaimed."

³ In a speech to the Southwark Liberal Association on July 21st.

⁴ Hitchman, *Public Life of the Earl of Beaconsfield*, pp. 551-2. The speech was made at the resplendent banquet offered to Beaconsfield and Salisbury by the Tory party on July 27th, and Hitchman reports that it "produced inextinguishable laughter."

The Eastern Question, Beaconsfield's Triumph

of his own verbosity, and gifted with an egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign his opponents and glorify himself. . . .

It will the better explain why the Prime Minister was able to take such a tone with impunity to recall that other Sessional events, more prosaic, perhaps, than those of international import, none the less helped him materially in conciliating sections of the "public" which normally were implacably anti-Tory. "Labour," for example, had received a Factories and Workshops Act which increased the protective efficacy of State inspection and substituted, besides, one satisfactorily drafted, and therefore usable, text for the often doubtful provisions of the forty-five overlapping Factory Acts of the past. The Irish "Home Rulers," again, had obtained an Irish Intermediate Education Act generously enough conceived to bring about a virtual cessation of obstruction towards the end of the Session.¹ Indeed, if the Division List on the occasion of the Government's end-of-the-Session triumph of August 3rd is carefully examined it will be found that 16 "Irish Liberals" voted for the Government and 31 more stayed away unpaired from the Opposition lobby. It was a result which had been obtained by what must in the circumstances be deemed a great Ministerial departure from the spirit in which the Toryism of 1869 had fought the Disestablishment of the Irish Church in the previous decade. Then the most dreadful cries of "sacrilege" had been raised even against Gladstone's proposal to allocate the surplus of Irish Church funds, after generous "compensations" had been deducted, to the relief of the most pitiable and helpless classes of the Irish population.² Now one million pounds of this same Church surplus was willingly made over for the sustentation of a scheme to promote Irish Secondary and Technical education.

¹ Clayden, *op. cit.*, p. 301, quotes from *The Times* summary of the Session: "The most noticeable fact in connexion with the Bill was the proof it afforded of a good understanding between the Government and the Home Rulers. This might have been otherwise inferred as well from the quietude of the Obstructionists during the latter part of the Session as from the vote" (of August 3rd).

² The preamble of the 1869 Act had indicated as the proper objects of expenditure: "lunatic asylums; idiot asylums; training schools for the deaf, dumb, and blind; the training of nurses; reformatories; and county infirmaries."

THE UNDERMINING OF "BEACONSFIELDISM"

"We have heard lately a great deal of 'Imperial policy' and of a 'great empire.' These are phrases which catch the ignorant and unwary (Hear, hear). Since this Government came into office your great empire—upon the map—has grown much greater. They have annexed the islands of Fiji (laughter): they have annexed also the country of the Transvaal, in South Africa, which is said to be as large as France. They have practically annexed the land of the Zulus and they have practically annexed Afghanistan. They have added also to your dominions the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean (much laughter), and they have incurred enormous, incalculable responsibilities in Egypt and Asia Minor. All these add to the burdens . . . of the 34,000,000 people who inhabit Great Britain and Ireland. We take the burdens and we pay the charge. This policy may lend a seeming glory to the Crown, and may give scope for patronage and promotion, and pay and pensions to a limited and favoured class, but to you, the people, it brings expenditure of blood and treasure, increased debt and taxes, and added risks of war in every quarter of the globe."

JOHN BRIGHT *at Manchester, October 25, 1879.*

"Wealthy men, professing popular opinions, have been trusted over and over again; but after obtaining national notoriety, they have deserted the cause of the people, and in the sunshine of place and emolument have ripened into obstructives and poor imitations of Conservatives. . . . I would urge the speedy adoption of the following measures:

1. Reform of the Land Laws.
2. A thoroughly representative municipal government for the whole Metropolis which would save the ratepayers two millions per annum.
3. Revision of the prerogatives of the Crown.
4. Disestablishment and Disendowment of the English Church which would give about ten millions annually to provide a Free Education for the People.
5. Self-Government for Ireland.
6. Reform of the Magistracy and Jury Laws.
7. Triennial Parliaments and an extension of Polling Hours . . . from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
8. Compulsory establishment of School Boards in all

districts, with compulsory, gratuitous, and secular instruction.

9. Complete and effectual reform of the City Guilds.
10. Candidates to be relieved of official election expenses, and such election expenses to be officially audited.
11. A thorough revision and ultimate abolition of the pension list.
12. Compulsory registration by local officials of voters for Parliamentary, School Board and Municipal elections.
13. Equal electoral voting power.
14. Registered resident Suffrage.
15. The abolition of property or rating qualification for parochial and municipal offices.
16. An equitable rating of all property for the purposes of local taxation and a national equalisation of the poor and education rates.
17. Abolition of the only purely hereditary Chamber in Europe, the House of Lords."

GEORGE SHIPTON, *Secretary of the London Trades Council, announces a candidature for Southwark, 1880.*

IT is in some respects surprising for a modern observer to read the endless accounts of the wage reductions, strikes, and unemployment which the long industrial depression had inflicted on England since 1874,¹ to learn, too, that similar troubles overtook British agriculture only a little later, and yet not to find fundamental changes resulting in working-class politics. How, it may be asked, could such things reign together as Jingo readiness for an anti-Russian war under Tory auspices and falls, say, in puddlers' daily wages from the 13s. 3d. of 1873 to the 7s. od. of April 1878?² Why, it may be added, did the Trades

¹ Gloomy annual summaries will be found in the *Economist*, March 14, 1874, March 13, 1875, March 11, 1876, March 10, 1877, etc. Here is an extract from that of March 11, 1876: "The commercial difficulties and failures and fall of prices which marked 1874 have been still more severe in 1875. It has been almost without exception a bad year in every trade and for every interest, not only in this country, but all over Europe and North and South America. The pressure has now been two years and a half in operation, reckoning from the American railway panic of September 1873. . . . In the great trades of iron, coal, hardware, and shipbuilding, 1875 has witnessed an increase of the depression and difficulties of 1874. These trades have been incessantly agitated by strikes and disputes. . . . The harvest in this country in 1875 was peculiar and unsatisfactory. . . ."

² *Capital and Labour*, November 13, 1878.

Union Congress of 1878 and that of the even blacker 1879 give voice to no altered social cry but still persist with the old narrow range of demands for more factory and mines inspectors, for factory and mines inspectors with practical experience of working conditions, for land tenure reform, a fair workmen's compensation law, and the like?¹ Were not the newspapers of November 1878 recording the progress of a farmers' offensive upon their unfortunate labourers' wages?² And was not the fundamental hostility towards Trade Unions cherished by the bulk of the employers finding widespread and ominous expression in terms like the following?³

Now that a wave of adversity is sweeping over the staple industries of our land . . . a discreet silence is observed for the most part by the self-constituted guides and exponents of what used to be styled "the opinion of the working classes." We have always maintained that the bulk of our operatives do not care a rush for the sentiments uttered and the demands made in their name by fussy nobodies, who claim to be their leaders. . . . Many of them ask, with angry surprise, what good their Unions are, if they cannot maintain wages or provide work at a time like the present. . . .

This is not the place to look for relieving touches accounting for the relatively conservative attitude of the bulk of the "Labour" leadership.⁴ There is no space, either, to venture an hypothesis as to why it was fated to be an American, Henry George, who, by a campaign opened across the Atlantic in 1879 and subsequently transferred to Britain, prepared the bolder spirits among the British working classes for the Hyndman-led Marxian Socialism of the still distressed 1880's. Nor is it here possible to recall how little relish even then the "Old Guard" of the Trade Unions

¹ Cf. W. J. Davis, *History of the British Trades Union Congress*.

² *Capital and Labour*, November 6, 1878: "The notice of a reduction of wages (of 6d. a day for those hitherto receiving 2s. 8d. or 2s. 9d., and of 4d. a day for others receiving less) given by the farmers of Kent and Sussex to their men expired on Saturday, and was followed by a strike. The Agricultural Labourers' Union of Kent and Sussex . . . decided that support should be given to the . . . 2,000 or 3,000 out of a body of 15,000, who may have to leave work. . . ."

³ *Ibid.*, November 13th. This paper was financed by a combination of big iron- and coal-masters and always made a big point of the way orders were lost to foreign competitors, unhindered by Union restrictions.

⁴ There was no doubt something in the view that things could not after all be so bad if statisticians like Giffen could claim that during the decade 1867-77 there had been an increase not only of 44 per cent in the national income, and of £2,400,000,000 in the national wealth, but an increase of 52 per cent in Savings Bank deposits and a decrease in the pauper percentage from 4.5 to 3.2 (*Capital and Labour*, November 27th).

The Undermining of "Beaconsfieldism"

showed for the newly imported German theories and how, after this "Old Guard" had got into Parliament with "middle-class Radical" aid, it fought hard and long against being compulsorily separated from its Radical allies and segregated into an independent Labour party. Here is only place to note that most of the working-class leaders of 1878-80 were basing their immediate hopes for their trades on the Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation advocated by philanthropic manufacturer-Radicals like Mundella. Politically, also, the "Labour" leaders had only such things to ask for as the Radicals were very ready to give, Suffrage Extension, Redistribution, Abolition of Electoral Qualifications for Town Councils and Boards of Guardians,¹ Extension of Polling Hours² and the like. The depression, in short, was not yet capable of creating Socialism but only of helping Parliamentary Radicalism. Nor could it do that to any marked extent unless the conviction were widely spread that the slump in trade was being aggravated and all chance of rapid recovery being lost owing to international tension being kept high by Beaconsfield's costly and adventurous Imperialism.

This, of course, is the "general conviction" that ultimately cost Beaconsfield his Prime Ministership. It is necessary here to show how its diffusion came to play an increasing share in the party struggle. Even during the height of the Jingo excitement of the spring of 1878 it had been impossible to ignore sober warnings from "moderate Liberals" that such excitement was prolonging "indefinitely the uncertainty that goes so far towards paralysing commercial enterprise. It sentences myriads upon myriads of honest and hard-toiling families, not to anxiety merely, but to failure."³ Indeed, in the very midst of the applause later showered upon them for having "foiled" Russia, Ministers found it wise to lay strong stress on the likelihood of some trade recovery following on their beneficent diplomacy at Constantinople and Berlin. It was particularly unfortunate for the Cabinet, therefore, that the autumn should bring news not of trade recovery but

¹ See the chapter on Local Government for the full grievances of "Labour."

² "Labour" claimed that all over the country working-class voters even when on the register were practically disfranchised by the practice of closing the poll before they were able to present themselves after their return from work. Sir Charles Dilke made this question his own and won his first success when by the 40 & 41 Vict., cap. 4, polling hours in the London boroughs (for Parliamentary elections) were extended from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. (1878).

³ *Illustrated London News*, editorial, March 30, 1878.

of further international complications. Nor was it hard to penetrate the thin veneer of justification alleged for the November invasion of Afghanistan when the Prime Minister himself accompanied the concluding preparations with such language as the following:¹

"We have long arrived at an opinion," he told the Guildhall banqueters of November 9th, "that an invasion of our Empire by passing the mountains which form our North-Western frontier is one which we need not dread. But it is a fact that that frontier is a haphazard and not a scientific one, and it is possible that it is in the power of any foe so to embarrass and disturb our dominion that we should be obliged to maintain a great military force in that quarter, and consequently entail upon this country and upon India a greatly increased expenditure. . . . With these views we have taken such measures as we think will effect the object we require. When these arrangements are made—and I cannot suppose that any considerable time will elapse before they are consummated—our North-Western frontier will no longer be a source of anxiety to the English people."

That Beaconsfield was again taking considerable risks is proved by the formation of a hostile Afghan Committee under the most distinguished Anglo-Indian leadership and the renewal of commercial complaints, fervently echoed by the Radicals, that:²

So far as the present depression has been due to three bad harvests, to famines in India and to trade disturbances in the United States, its causes are already past. The economic causes are at an end: there remain only the political causes, such as the fear of war, the uncertainty as to the future of Europe and the East, the great and ever-increasing military expenditure in this country and in every part of the continent. . . .

But for the time good fortune attended the Prime Minister. On the very afternoon of Parliament's reassembly to hear the Government's account of why Afghanistan was being invaded a telegram was to hand announcing a "brilliant victory" (December 5th). Opposition critics, of course, did not find the work of checking the Government lightened thereby. But if they failed to persuade any part of the Government majority to turn against the Cabinet's policy, they could not be prevented from uncovering some of the misrepresentation and suppression which had been employed to convince the British "public" of the Amir of Afghanistan's "hos-

¹ *The Times*, November 10th.

² *Capital and Labour*, November 27, 1878, the non-party organ of a federation of iron- and coal-masters.

The Undermining of "Beaconsfieldism"

tility." That "hostility" had apparently been confined to the Amir's refusal to admit into Kabul, his capital, an armed British Mission after unwillingly receiving some Russians. But in the Calcutta accounts this refusal had figured as a "rebuff" so "insolent" that war could only be avoided "at the complete sacrifice of proper self-respect, and at the grave risk of very considerable loss of prestige in the eyes of our Indian subjects and of our feudatory princes."¹

If the Beaconsfield Cabinet, then, thanks to the "brilliant victory" got its normal majorities from Parliament before the adjournment for a long Christmas recess, that does not mean that there was not a large amount of public suspicion and dislike of what it was doing.² In fact it is only necessary to read the long series of constituency speeches delivered during January by the "advanced Liberal" M.P.s³ to see how popular was denunciation of the Government's Afghan proceedings. These, moreover, were condemned not merely as tyrannical and expensive. It was more dangerous to the Government that they were condemned also as deepening the already serious trade depression⁴ by prolonging the Anglo-Russian tension which, since 1876, had been playing havoc with "commercial confidence" all over the world. The political situation was obviously not one permitting a disaster to occur with impunity, and especially a disaster directly ascribable to the "aggressive" policies of the Government.

Unfortunately for the British Cabinet a serious military reverse overtook it just before Parliament reassembled on February 13th. On February 11th was announced the practical annihilation of a strong British column which had advanced into Zululand from Natal, and what made the Government's position worse was that it could again be charged with having undertaken "aggression"

¹ *The Times*, September 23rd, Indian Correspondent's communication.

² Cf. *Illustrated London News*, January 18, 1879: "We give no opinion of the justice or the necessity of the War. That it has been unpopular can hardly be denied. That it has been a serious misfortune to India and perhaps also to the British Empire, will be generally, however reluctantly, admitted."

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, January 11th, for Forster at Bradford, Sir Wilfrid Lawson at Whitehaven, Mundella at Sheffield, and Holms at Glasgow. Denunciation of the Government's foreign policy was also a prominent feature of the Leeds Conference of the National Liberal Federation.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, February 1st and February 8th, for full-page pictures of the Sheffield and Manchester Relief Committees at work. Though the Government charged those strong Radicals, Rylands and Jacob Bright, with greatly exaggerating the distress for political purposes, the unskilled labouring class and its dependents suffered terribly.

and "invasion." Certainly when the Vote of Censure moved by the very Radical Sir Charles Dilke and ably supported by Mr. Chamberlain was at last come to in the order of Parliamentary business (March 27th), the Government felt it to be wise to give some disarming assurances. Emphasis was laid on the reprimands which Ministers had inflicted on their over-zealous South African High Commissioner, and it was urged that the Government's Zulu policy was not one of conquest but of securing the disbandment of the powerful military force which, under Cetewayo, threatened the whole future of civilisation in South Africa. Even after these conciliatory assurances the balance of the three nights' Debate was felt to have gone markedly against the Government,¹ and the Division of 246 against 306 was one of the most encouraging which the Opposition had had for a long time.

Dominated by the ever-changing phases of the Afghan and Zulu Wars as its two predecessors had been by those of the Russo-Turkish struggle, the Session of 1879 yielded but a disappointing harvest of domestic legislation. Conscious though it was of the need for some "popular" legislation in advance of a General Election that could not be postponed beyond the end of 1880, the Cabinet, hanging nervously on the Afghan and South African news, was unable to muster the energetic determination necessary to drive even its programme of relatively non-contentious Departmental Bills through the forms of the British Constitution. If the Local Government Board, for example, failed to take its Valuation (for Rating) and its River Conservancy Bills to the Statute Book, it flinched even more markedly before the task of forcing the squires of its own side to accept the reductions of justices' power and influence promised by a County Boards Bill which might have been popular with farmers. It is scarce to be wondered at that such a hesitant Local Government Board was almost beaten when it resolved to oppose a Radical Bill for abolishing the special property qualification for seats on the Town Councils and other local authorities. "Labour," now anxious to win its way on to such assemblies, was behind Mr. Mundella's Municipal Corporations Bill and a Division of 167 against the Government's 173² hardly indicated that the Government had been wise to oppose.

¹ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, April 5, 1879. This paper, committed to neither side, was already of opinion that "the approaching General Election" was likely to go against the Government.

² *Hansard*, April 2nd. It is significant that the Government decided to

The Undermining of "Beaconsfieldism"

The Government's hesitant playing with the notion of doing something popular with the "millions" which should yet be "safe" is, perhaps, best instanced in the cases of the Patents Bill and the Bill to define the Liability of Employers for Injuries to Workmen. The case for helping the poor workman inventor by cheapening the preliminary costs of registering patents was already attracting that energetic member of the Trades Union Congress, W. J. Davis, founder of the Brassworkers' Society. But though the Gladstone Government of 1880 was afterwards persuaded to muster the energy to legislate,¹ the Disraeli Government got no farther than an abortive Bill. In the case of Workmen's Compensation, again, the Government met the "Labour" Bill of Messrs. Macdonald and Burt, who in 1874 had been sent to the Commons as the first "trades" members, with a rival measure of its own which was, however, abandoned in July.

Government legislation of importance, in fact, was ultimately confined to two Bills, the Army Discipline Bill and the Irish University Bill. The Army Discipline Bill could from some points of view be claimed as a "Liberal" measure² and, indeed, only the Irish obstructionists affected to believe that there was anything but advantage in bringing the Crown's "Articles of War" for the first time under direct Parliamentary control and sanction. But as was inevitable in view of the long history of Radical agitation against the lash, the Radicals joined the Irish in determined resistance when the flogging section of the Bill was reached. The story of Chamberlain's pertinacious fight is well known and how the Government hoped to end it by inducing his nominal leader, Lord Hartington, to intervene against him. How Chamberlain replied by disowning Hartington's leadership for himself and the Radicals,³ and how Hartington was finally induced to move the

allow part of the Bill to pass just in advance of the 1880 Election (43 Vict., cap. 17). "Labour's" attitude may be gauged not merely from the "Labour Representation" manifestoes but from such past displays as the South Yorkshire Miners banking £1,000 in the name of their agent in order to allow him to qualify for election at Barnsley.

¹ In 1883 by the 46 & 47 Vict., cap. 57, which reduced the fee on application for provisional protection from £5 to £1 and that for the first four years of the patent to £3 though it had been £20 for the first three years previously.

² Cf. Sir W. Harcourt on Second Reading: "The consent of the Crown to bring the Articles of War into the Mutiny Act was a great advantage. It had brought the whole thing under Parliamentary revision and control." Much of the Bill, indeed, seems to have been based on drafts prepared during the days of the Gladstone Government.

³ Cf. Garvin's *Chamberlain*, i, 270-3.

abolition of flogging himself—these things, too, have often been narrated, and deservedly, for they were very significant political developments.

If the Government had offered the Irish party the Irish University Bill at the beginning of the Session, it is just possible that the whole stormy history of the 1879 Session might have been different. But whether Ministers withheld the Bill from the desire of using it as a possible “bribe” just before or just after the General Election, or whether they were merely hesitant about touching the dangerous question which had ruined the “great Gladstone administration,”¹ certain it is that their delay mightily helped the “extremist” element in the Irish party to gain control. Just as the Catholic hierarchy, too, had been given no motive for counselling restraint among the Irish Parliamentarians, so also it was without particular reason for frowning upon Michael Davitt’s Land Agitation.² If the “serious agricultural depression” was already causing tenant-farmer agitation in England and Scotland, agitation in Ireland was all the more justifiable from the altogether more helpless and impoverished situation of the Irish agricultural classes.

Parnell and Obstruction, then, had long resumed their rise to ascendancy within the Irish Parliamentary party when, so late in the Session as June 25th, the harassed Government stopped an Irish Bill for endowing sectarian colleges all over Ireland by announcing its own intention to propose legislation.³ As the Bill, too, finally emerged it proved a not unskilful compromise between the Irish determination to have a large share of the “Irish Church surplus” for Catholic colleges directly under the control of the hierarchy, and the British Protestant resolution that this could never be yielded. There was to be a new examining and degree-awarding University of Ireland with State recognised examinations and degrees open to all, and Catholic students and institutions were also expected to be the principal beneficiaries from the scheme of exhibitions, scholarships, fellowships, and prizes which Parliament undertook to finance. There is ground, then, for

¹ Cf. also Sir Stafford Northcote (*Hansard*, May 21st) who wanted to wait for the results of the Intermediate Education Act to show themselves.

² Usually given as having begun early in 1879 in Mayo. After serving seven and a half years for treason-felony Davitt had been released on ticket-of-leave, had visited America, and had then returned after establishing touch with the Irish Americans.

³ Cf. *Hansard*, June 25th, for Cross, Home Secretary.

The Undermining of "Beaconsfieldism"

believing that Ministers might have had a much easier Session if they had pledged themselves earlier to the University Bill and to a second Bill for repealing the oppressive Irish Convention Act dating back to the anti-revolutionary legislation of George III. These two Acts which they finally admitted to the Statute Book would, after all, with that other Act of 1879 that took £1,300,000 from the "Church surplus" as the basis of an Irish Teachers' Pension Fund, have made a very respectable programme of "benefits for Ireland." Offered at the beginning of the Session such a programme would at least have delayed the emergence of obstruction as the main activity of the Irish Parliamentary party.

While the Parliamentary Session had been running its difficult course, affairs in Afghanistan and Zululand appeared gradually to brighten. Thus on May 25th a new Amir of Afghanistan had signed a treaty conceding the "scientific frontier," a British Resident at Kabul, and British control of his foreign policy.¹ In the Zulu case, too, after many anxious moments good news came to hand on July 23rd when the decisive victory of July 3rd at Ulundi was announced.² As in both cases, also, the Government refrained from that policy of direct annexation which would have played into the hands of Gladstone and the Radicals, it is difficult to find substantial evidence indicating any certainty of a Government defeat in the event of a Dissolution. Despite all the activities of the "Two Hundreds" and "Three Hundreds" of the Chamberlain's National Liberal Federation, despite the propaganda of the Liberation Society and the National Reform Union, despite, even, the grim effects of the depression, the indications pointed merely to a considerable reduction of the Conservative majority. Were not supporters of the Government able to boast of 1879 as having been, after all, a more glorious year for the Empire than 1878 despite the dark forebodings of all the "prophets of evil" from Gladstone to Chamberlain?

A great change, of course, came after September 6th when the news arrived of the rising of Kabul against the newly arrived British Resident and that official's death with all his Guard. That a new war should have proved necessary and a new burdening of sorely tried India with great military costs undoubtedly did

¹ *Illustrated London News*, May 31st. The British were to have complete control of the Khyber and Mishni Passes and of the Khurum, Pishin, and Sibi valleys.

² *Ibid.*, July 26th, which gives the British loss as only ten killed.

the Government incalculable harm and correspondingly stimulated the Opposition. Uneasy news, too, from Egypt and the Transvaal Boers increased the possibilities of drawing up such apparently conclusive indictments of the Government as that well-known one delivered to an immense Manchester audience by John Bright on October 25th.¹ Its best-applauded section is worth putting down:²

If Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party had remained in office, there would have been no danger of a war with Russia (cheers), and I believe there would have been no war between Russia and Turkey. (Loud and repeated cheers.) There would have been no Zulu War (hear, hear) and there would have been no war against the Ameer of Afghanistan. The finances of India would not thus have been disordered, and our friends of the Chamber of Commerce might now . . . or very soon have had the cotton duties in India of which they complain so much entirely abolished. (Cheers.) And with regard to English finance there would have been no juggling (cheers): there would have been no deception: no thimble-rigging (loud laughter and cheering); everything connected with your finance would have been sound and above board (hear, hear); the income-tax would long since have been repealed (cheers), and the depression in trade, if it had come, and some of it must have come, from the state of things in the United States particularly, and the state of our own harvests, but the depression of trade, if it had come, would not have been aggravated by a policy restless and wicked (cheers) in three-quarters of the globe (cheers).

It is not, perhaps, to be wondered at if before long ex-Members of the Gladstone Cabinet were beginning to sketch a possible programme for the next Government. Mr. Forster, for example, speaking at Leeds on November 14th, said:³

Well, if the next Parliament really deals with enfranchisement, household suffrage for the counties, the redistribution of seats, with county government, the land laws in Ireland and England, and the licensing law (shout of "The Scottish Church"), I do not think we can be charged with a scanty programme, not even by my friend who wishes to put upon it the Church.

But there were indications even in that very meeting that Radicals would press for more, and as for the Irish Parnellites they were

¹ *Illustrated London News*, November 1, 1879, for Bright saying of the overflow meeting alone that it was the greatest of its kind he had ever seen.

² From the *Speeches of the Marquis of Hartington and John Bright delivered at Manchester on October 24th and 25th, 1879*, which was issued in pamphlet form for the 1880 General Election.

³ *Illustrated London News*, November 22, 1879.

The Undermining of "Beaconsfieldism"

already launched on that swirling sea of Land League agitation which brought the first three epoch-making arrests of November 19th.¹

But the Cabinet, long accustomed to dangerous storms, was not minded to surrender power without a struggle, and there was in effect a conspicuous stream of official counter-oratory. It ranged from the assertion of the Colonial Secretary, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, that a Gladstone Government during the Eastern Crisis would have meant Russia at Constantinople and the Amir a vassal of the Tsar to the Prime Minister's Guildhall announcement of November 9th that a revival of trade of a "permanent character" seemed to have begun.² Much, too, was naturally made of the relatively rapid reoccupation of Kabul, reached by an avenging force as early as October 12th, and the new hopes that such a conspicuous example of British power raised of convincing all the world that British India was impregnable.

Not till the effects of Gladstone's great oratory during his "Midlothian Campaign" of late November and early December became fully visible was it, in fact, plain how perilous the Government's electoral position was likely to be. The spectacle of the ageing ex-Prime Minister declining to continue in the representation of Greenwich, because a place containing Woolwich Arsenal would hardly leave him completely free to decide armament questions on their merits, had been interesting enough in itself.³ Still more interesting had been his determination to decline the offer of a safe seat in Leeds and to accept, instead, the proffered candidature for the County of Midlothian (Edinburgh), perilously dominated though it was by the "influence" of the Tory Duke of Buccleuch, a nobleman believed to be stiff-necked enough to create faggot-voters in the defence of the electoral preserves represented by his son. But most absorbing of all proved to be the mass enthusiasm generated throughout Lowland Scotland by

¹ *Illustrated London News*, November 22, 1879, which also reports: "Mr. Parnell continues his tenant-right meetings in Ireland. Emblems of force are conspicuous at these gatherings." The *Illustrated London News* of the personage week had noted Parnell and some of his followers appealing to British audiences at Manchester, Bolton, Salford, and Newcastle. In this last place Cowen, the Radical M.P., himself introduced the visiting "Home Ruler."

² Chamberlain made a conspicuous hit when dealing with the Prime Minister's claim that the chemical industry showed expansion. It was, he claimed, expansion in the production of "sulphur and saltpetre."

³ The Greenwich "Five Hundred" had begged him to stay and had assured him of the complete safety of his seat.

Gladstone's personal appearance in full vigour upon the electoral ground which he had to cultivate for the General Election.¹ That mass enthusiasm was soon seen as bound to have marked repercussions throughout the country,² and the situation became even more anxious for the Government when new risings in Afghanistan imperilled the "avenging" British army in Kabul and forced it to take to cantonments outside while sending to India for speedy relief.³ It is plain enough why Ministers gave up all immediate hopes of being able to stage an election and prepared resignedly to take the 1874 Parliament into a Seventh Session to begin early in February 1880. Some favourable election opportunity might, perhaps, occur or be created during its course in the fashion caustically denounced in advance by Mr. Gladstone when warning Midlothian of the possibility of "some new theatrical stroke" and the sending up of "some new rocket into the sky."⁴

The new "theatrical stroke" came on March 8th when, after a Session begun on February 5th, it was announced that there was to be a speedy Dissolution and General Election. Cheered by two fortunate by-election results at Liverpool and Southwark, the Prime Minister had resolved to put his fortune to the hazard and had penned a Ministerial manifesto in the shape of a letter to his Irish Lord-Lieutenant. After condemning Irish agitation this epistle went on to warn the country of the Opposition's possible readiness to accept Home Rule as a method of precipitating that "decomposition" of the Empire which was alleged to be its policy. The manifesto ended on a sonorous "world influence" note:⁵

Rarely in this century has there been an occasion more critical. The power of England and the peace of Europe will largely depend on the verdict of the country. Her Majesty's present Ministers have hitherto

¹ He also delivered short speeches on the way to Midlothian in reply to welcoming crowds at Preston, Carlisle, Hawick, and Galashiels, and the full tale of his speechmaking includes further speeches of this kind on his way back. No wonder the hostile *Blackwood's* admitted (January 1880): "As a personal achievement it is as marvellous as anything in his whole career. The mental and physical energy, the powers of endurance, the unfailing resources of rhetoric which sustained and animated the whole course of his 'campaign' amply account for the enthusiasm of his supporters. . . ."

² Cf. *Illustrated London News*, November 29th, December 6th, December 13th, December 20th.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, December 20th. Kabul had been evacuated on December 14th.

⁴ This is from the Edinburgh Music Hall speech of November 25th.

⁵ *The Times*, March 9, 1880.

The Undermining of "Beaconsfieldism"

been enabled to secure that peace, so necessary to the welfare of all civilised countries, and so peculiarly the interest of our own. But this ineffable blessing cannot be obtained by the passive principle of non-interference. Peace rests on the presence, not to say the ascendancy, of England in the Councils of Europe. Even at this moment, the doubt, supposed to be inseparable from popular election, if it does not diminish, certainly arrests her influence. . . .

This "brazen" attempt to divert the stream of General Election oratory from the Afghan, Zulu, and Near Eastern record of the Government, not to mention its melancholy Budget and fiercely criticised London Water Bill,¹ was accompanied by legislation intended to placate aggrieved interests. Thus Ireland received two Acts bearing on the Relief of Distress,² Scotland the Act "to abolish the landlord's right of hypothec for rent in Scotland," and "Labour" the Act "to abolish the property qualification for members of municipal corporations and local governing bodies." Those Birmingham Radical leaders who feared to the last that these methods might well yield "Dizzy" a majority plainly had some cause.³

Radical pessimists, however, were under-rating the weight of counteracting factors. To read of the activities of the new order of London Radical Clubs, in which modern British Socialism was soon to be born, is to become convinced that there was hardly a working-class leader in the country who was likely to be affected by the Conservative tactics.⁴ To learn, too, that the current "agricultural distress" had resulted in the formation of

¹ A Bill to buy up the London Water Companies and enable the water supply to be put under indirect ratepayer control. Unfortunately the suggested price of 28 or 29 millions included payment for "watered stock" and Stock Exchange profiteering most distasteful to the London Radicals.

² The Act "to enable guardians to borrow money for procuring seed potatoes and other seed for tenants in Ireland" and the Act "to render valid proceedings for the relief of distress in Ireland."

³ Cf. *Life of R. W. Dale of Birmingham*, p. 430, for the pre-election views of this prominent Dissenting leader: "Speaking at Reading on the evening after the dissolution was announced, I said that perhaps the Tories might keep a majority of ten, though if we were loyal we might turn them out altogether. . . ." The relative pessimism of views like these was partially due to the conviction of many "moderates" that a victory for Disraeli was necessary if Russia was to be prevented from renewing trouble in the Near East and on India's North-West Frontier. (Cf. the moderate and widely read *Graphic* throughout the election for this unenthusiastic kind of pro-Disraelism.)

⁴ Cf. E. Belfort Bax's *Reminiscences*, p. 73: "In the late seventies and the early eighties the workmen's club was a strong political force. . . . This was especially the case as regards London, where there was a considerable and well-organised network of these clubs . . . there was not a district throughout the Metropolis that did not boast of one or more of them. . . ."

a *Farmers' Alliance* with a surprisingly Radical programme is to understand why the counties also were destined to yield many results that took Conservatives aback.¹ Here is the original programme of the *Farmers' Alliance*:

1. To secure the better representation of tenant-farmers in Parliament.
2. To stimulate improved cultivation of the land and obtain security for the capital of tenants invested in the improvement of their holdings.
3. To encourage greater freedom in the cultivation of the soil and the disposal of its produce.
4. To obtain the abolition of class privileges involved in the laws of distress and hypothec.
5. To promote the reform of the Game Laws.
6. To obtain the alteration of all legal presumptions which operate unfairly against tenant-farmers.
7. To secure to ratepayers their legitimate share in county government.
8. To obtain a fair apportionment of local burdens between landlord and tenant.

Landlords would have been altogether more pleased if in exchange for the 10 and 15 per cent remissions of rent, which they were having to allow their hard-pressed tenants, these had showed less readiness to accept Radical explanations of their "distress"² and more readiness to join their landlords' pressure for Reciprocity. Reciprocity meant, in effect, "treating the foreigner's trade as he treated England's," and, applied to agriculture, it meant heavy taxation of cheap imports of wheat and meat.

Fear of the higher food prices threatened by this Reciprocity talk was, in fact, a considerable anti-Tory election factor in the industrial districts.³ So, too, was the depression, to judge from

¹ The most famous was in Midlothian where Gladstone ejected Lord Dalkeith by a majority of 211.

² Cf. Ewald's *Beaconsfield and His Times*, ii, 489, for the Farmers' Alliance programme. This book also contains the following bitter attack of February 17, 1882 (Speech of Jacob Wilson): "I sincerely believe it to be most dangerous, mischievous, and insidious. . . . It had evidently been well considered, and thought out in all its bearings by its promoters, before they launched it on the public. . . . It embraces the aspirations of the Irish Home Ruler by practically granting fixity of tenure without requiring an equivalent from one party or granting compensation to the other, which is nothing less than robbery and confiscation; whilst it, at the same time, plays into the hands of the Manchester and Birmingham Schools, whose objects have ever been to destroy the bulwarks and undermine the foundation upon which the agricultural interests of the country have stood and flourished for generations past. The line of action of the Farmers' Alliance is first to create a feud between landlord and tenant . . . its next move will be to set the labourer against his employer."

³ Cf. Bright at Manchester, October 25, 1879, for a hot attack on the Reciprocity campaign.

The Undermining of "Beaconsfieldism"

some of the most widely circulated of the Election Songs. Here is one representative quotation from a Book of Liberal Election Songs of which over 200,000 copies were produced:¹

The Tories are up, and the Wages are down,
This is the burden of talk in the town:
The State is corrupt from the toe to the crown,
For the Tories are up, and the Wages are down.

There is woe in the land, and the grief-stricken face
Of the worker in cotton, and woollen and lace,
Is haggard and wan, both in village and town,
For the Tories are up, and the Wages are down.

There is grief in the land, and the pitmen who toil
In the dangerous mine and the farmers whose soil
Repays not his labour, have reason to frown,
For the Tories are up, and their Wages are down.

Here is another less lugubrious and more combative ballad:

Who for "Scientific Frontier"
Led us into useless war?
Made the money fly still faster
Spread distrust both near and far?

CHORUS

For so long we've had the Tory
Gladstone now and England's glory!
Down with Beaconsfield and send
Gladstone on, the People's Friend.

Who made trade sink lower daily?
Drove the commerce from our land?
Set aside Old England's glory?
Governed with a selfish hand?

CHORUS

Finally, in completing a survey of the reasons for the resounding electoral failure of the Government, sight should not be lost of

¹ *Liberal Election Songs*, published by Heywood's of Manchester. Though this was the most widely circulated Book of Election Songs which the writer has seen, the Birmingham Radicals had in part anticipated those of Manchester when, in preparation for the great "public meeting" of May 31, 1877, following on the foundation of the National Liberal Federation, they had issued the *Bingley Hall Ballads for May 31st, 1877*. There is one Ballad entitled *The Working Man's Lament*; and another entitled *Put Gladstone at the Helm*. The repeated mention of Gladstone in the Election Ballads is particularly significant of the reasons why Lords Hartington and Granville were compelled to tell the recalcitrant Queen that he was the only possible Liberal Prime Minister.

the cumulative effect of the long years of effort by the Liberation Society, the National Reform Union, and Mr. Gladstone. Particularly does the renewed enthusiasm excited by Gladstone's actual election efforts in Midlothian during March and April 1880¹ show how near the Radical millions already were to the temper which later permitted his semi-canonisation as the "Grand Old Man." The plebeian love and loyalty once evoked in succession by Wilkes, Paine, Burdett, Cobbett, and Feargus O'Connor was now tending to concentrate on a very different man. Bright, who in 1868 had been the equal if not the superior of Gladstone in popular favour, and Hartington, who for five years had been Gladstone's nominal leader, were alike dwarfed by the colossal political stature which their colleague was assuming.

¹ Cf. *Graphic*, April 10th, for the scenes in Edinburgh after the declaration of the Midlothian poll. It continues: "Mr. Gladstone's success in Midlothian was telegraphed without loss of time to all the principal towns in the United Kingdom, and at many places was made the occasion of special rejoicing and demonstration by the Liberals, public meetings, illuminations, and enthusiastic congratulations being everywhere the order of the day, or rather night. At Liverpool the Reform Club was illuminated, and an immense crowd assembled in front of the building, the posting up of the polling numbers being received with excited cheering and the singing of "Auld Lang Syne." (Note: This despite the failure to wrench even one of the three Liverpool seats from the entrenched Tories.) The London Liberals have appointed a committee to organise a monster demonstration in honour of the new member for Midlothian upon his return to the Metropolis."

This immense personal position achieved by Gladstone would hardly have been prophesied even so late as January 1880, when constituency proceedings actually seemed to be turning increasingly upon programmes. The very typical Liberals of Darlington, for example, were selecting a candidate without any apparent suspicion of the coming Gladstone Premiership in their concentration upon "County Government Reform, Reduction of the County Franchise, Redistribution of Seats, Extension of Hours of Polling, Repeal of the Law of Primogeniture, Amendment of the Law of Entail, Tenant Right, Free Farming, Sunday Closing, Local Option, Reduction of the Irish Franchise, Extension of Local Self-Government . . . equal Laws and Liberties for Ireland, and a Burials Bill," not to mention Disestablishment, Retrenchment, and reprobation of Beaconsfield's war-making (*Northern Echo*, January 21, 1880).

IRELAND DELAYS "PROGRESS," 1880-I

"We have . . . declared an unceasing war against landlordism; not a war to call on our people to shoulder the rifle and to go out in the open field and settle the question that is now agitating Ireland—although I am not opposed to a settlement of that nature providing I could see a chance of success—but for the fourth time during the present century we have tried a physical struggle with England, and instead of hurting England we have generally hurt ourselves. Now I believe it is far better to meet on different ground and to do battle in a different mode, and in declaring this war against Irish landlordism, in not paying rent in order to bring down the garrison in Ireland, we know we are doing a proper work. We are preparing the way for that independence which you enjoy in this great American republic."

MICHAEL DAVITT *at Kansas City, September 1880.*

"I have not lost confidence in the people of Ireland. . . . But they have dangers and temptations and seductions offered to them such as never were before presented to a people, and the trial of their virtue is severe. Nevertheless, they will have to go through that trial; we have endeavoured to pay them the debt of justice, and of liberal justice. We have no reason to believe they do not acknowledge it. We wish they may have the courage to acknowledge it openly and manfully. . . . We are convinced that the Irish nation desires to take free and full advantage of the Land Act. But Mr. Parnell says: 'No, you must wait until I have submitted cases; until I tell you whether the Court that Parliament has established can be trusted.' Trusted for what? Trusted to reduce what he says is seventeen millions a year of property to the three millions which he graciously allows. And when he finds it is not to be trusted for that—and I hope to God it is not to be trusted for any such purpose—then he will endeavour . . . to procure for the Irish people the repeal of the Act. But in the meantime what says he? That until he has submitted his test cases any farmer who pays his rent is a fool—a dangerous denunciation in Ireland, a dangerous thing to be denounced as a fool by . . . the head of the most violent party in Ireland. . . ."

MR. GLADSTONE *at Leeds, October 7, 1881.*

"I hate coercion, but I loathe violence and disorder more. I do not judge the morality of Irish proceedings, but I recognise facts. We are in a state of war. . . . They want to destroy

the Government, and perhaps in this they may be successful. They want also to make all government of Ireland by England impossible, and in this they will assuredly fail, as all our people, Radicals included, will resist them to the death. . . . They have great practical wrongs and grievances and one sentimental grievance—the Union. The latter is one on which we cannot and will not yield. . . .”

Chamberlain to Morley, then tending to “wobble,” December 18, 1881. (From GARVIN’S “Chamberlain,” i, 345.)

THERE were contemporaries who thought of the 1880 elections as having enacted a quasi-Revolution because the Liberal Whips reported that the new House contained 347 Liberals, 240 Conservatives, and 65 Irish Nationalists, and because it was plain that Chamberlain’s Radical caucus at Birmingham had played an essential part in the victory.¹ Of course such contemporary hopes and fears always tend to seem ludicrous *sub specie aeternitatis*. Yet it is wise not unduly to depreciate the meaning and effect of the electoral changes accomplished in the spring of 1880. The majority of the 347 Liberals might still be composed of great industrialists, wealthy merchants and ship-owners, ambitious and successful lawyers and scions of Whig landed families. The great “brewing interest” might still contribute three Besses and a Whitbread to the Liberal ranks despite disgust with Local Option Radicals, and the Rothschild who headed British banking might still sit as a Liberal because of gratitude for Jewish Emancipation and in spite of disapproval of Gladstone’s views of foreign policy.

But undoubtedly the old Radical leaven in the Liberal lump received notable reinforcement as a result of the 1880 elections.²

¹ Cf. *Graphic* (April 17th) articles under the rubrics of “Revolutionary Alarms” and “Caucuses.” The former deprecates current “jeremiads of lamentation and woe,” based on the assumption that “Mr. Gladstone is in actual fact the Dictator of England. The country lies prostrate at his feet. Backed by a subservient band of adherents, he can do whatever he pleases, and he will probably please to do a good deal of revolutionary work.” The “Caucuses” article practically accepts the Chamberlainite claim to have decided the issue in virtually all the 67 boroughs and 10 county divisions in which the “Birmingham plan” had been put into operation but regrets the forcing out of “moderate Liberals” from electoral influence which has been entailed.

² Cf. Andrew Lang’s *Sir Stafford Northcote*, ii, 149, for the Conservative calculation that there were now “113 extreme or unclassified Radicals” in the House.

Northampton, for example, replaced two Tories, the one a local brewer and the other an undistinguished lawyer, by Labouchere¹ and Bradlaugh. In sending J. B. Firth instead of a Tory to accompany Sir Charles Dilke to Westminster, Chelsea introduced into Parliament another "dangerous Radical" with a mission. Firth, in fact, was soon the leader of a formidable movement which demanded that the vast privileges and property of the City of London and its Guilds should be taken from the narrow cliques in control and made over instead to a new democratic Municipality representing all London.² Southwark, too, when it sent Professor Thorold Rogers to Parliament as one of the two Liberal members it elected in replacement of two Tories, was despatching an economist of international repute and one who had arrived independently at almost Marxian conclusions on the economic and class motivation of most of the "great movements" of history.³ Professor Bryce, again, if hardly the ideal representative for the grim industrial poverty of the East End Tower Hamlets, was more likely to understand and to sympathise with their population's aspirations than a Conservative colleague carried by the "drink interest." And to revert to the provincial scene once more, the capture by Passmore Edwards of a Tory seat at Salisbury, the capture of another at Ipswich by Jesse Collings, Henry Broadhurst's return for Stoke as a third Labour member to sit beside Thomas Burt and Alexander Macdonald, the pro-Parnellite changes in Ireland which permitted the appearance at Westminster of T. P. O'Connor and Justin McCarthy—all these will be found part of the same electoral story. To many Conservatives the loss of thirty-six county seats in England and Wales,⁴ and the return of Scottish and Welsh majorities prepared for Disestablishment were the ugliest electoral results of all.

¹ See Thorold's *Life of Henry Labouchere*. By contrast with Bradlaugh, "the bellowing blasphemer," Labouchere was regarded by some of Northampton's "respectable" almost as a moderate. Yet his election address had offered radical revision of "the laws regarding land, so as to encourage its tenure by the many instead of its absorption by the few," independence to the farmer from "the caprices of the landlords," the enfranchisement of the agricultural labourer and the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of England.

² Cf. J. F. B. Firth's *Reform of London Government and of the City Guilds*, 1888.

³ See especially his *Economic Interpretation of History and Industrial and Commercial History of England*.

⁴ Cf. *Quarterly Review*, April 1880, on "The Conservative Defeat." Its figures for the party voting totals were: Conservative votes, 1,431,805, and Liberal, 1,877,296 (p. 553).

Some of the first obstacles encountered by the Radical tide did not prove so difficult to overcome as at one time seemed possible. Thus even Queen Victoria's attempt to bar Gladstone's return to the Premiership and to insist, instead, on either Lord Hartington or Lord Granville was found to be impossible to maintain for long.¹ Then the Radical pressure for at least one younger Radical to sit in the Cabinet alongside Bright had to be conceded despite Gladstone's objections to Chamberlain's lack of previous experience in a subordinate post. There would almost certainly have been two if Chamberlain had been able to muster the rest of the "advanced" now being considered for posts of importance for the first time, Mundella, Dilke, Fawcett, and Courtney, or even, perhaps, Dilke alone, behind a common negotiation.² But ultimately only Chamberlain was in a position to profit from the bold stand he had made. Of his manner of negotiation with Gladstone's envoy he wrote as follows to his ally Collings:³

I told Harcourt that personally I did not care a damn, and would rather be out, in which case I would endeavour to organise a "pure Left" party in the House and the country, which should support the Government if they brought in Radical measures and oppose them everywhere if they did not. The result would be the running of Radical candidates in all borough elections.

Finally, I said that, out of friendship for Dilke, I would if he were in the Cabinet take the Secretaryship of the Treasury—but, of course, an arrangement of the kind would not be so satisfactory as a frank recognition of the Radical wing with two at least in the Cabinet. . . .

Harcourt asked if this was ultimatum as he had thought Dilke would not absolutely refuse subordinate office. . . .

I told Harcourt this was final decision. . . .

I am still almost inclined to hope that we may all be out and independent. . . .

Thus it was that Chamberlain alone entered the Cabinet of fifteen to represent Radicalism there jointly with Bright.

¹ Cf. Holland's *Life of the Duke of Devonshire* (Lord Hartington), i, 270-8.

² Thus Garvin's *Chamberlain*, i, 298, contains the information that both Dilke and Chamberlain had figured in Hartington's provisional Cabinet list.

³ Garvin's *Chamberlain*, i, 298. Queen Victoria attempted to make stipulations in regard to considering "the names of such very advanced Radicals as Mr. Chamberlain and Sir C. Dilke." She demanded from Gladstone proof "that Mr. Chamberlain has never spoken disrespectfully of the Throne or expressed openly Republican principles" and asked that Dilke should publicly express regret for "his very offensive Speeches on the Civil List and Royal family. . . ." Guedalla's *Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, ii, 90.

Despite an almost universal impression to the contrary, the legislative record of the Session which followed must be regarded as good. It is not every Session begun on May 20th that ends with such "progressive" legislation secured as a Burials Act to permit Dissenting funeral services in the churchyard, an Employers' Liability Act to extend the workmen's right to claim compensation for personal injuries and a Ground Game Bill permitting farmers to shoot rabbits and hares on land occupied by them and even to authorise others to remove these pests.¹ Each of these Acts represents the culmination of a long and difficult crusade as would be made very plain by a perusal, say, of the angry comments of Church newspapers on that Burials Act clause² which ran:

At any burial under this Act all persons shall have free access to the churchyard. . . . The burial may take place, at the option of the person . . . being responsible for the same . . . either without any religious service, or with such Christian and orderly religious service at the grave, as such person shall think fit; and any person or persons who shall be thereunto invited, or be authorised by the person having the charge of or being responsible for such burial, may conduct such service or take part in any religious act thereat. The words "Christian service" in this section shall include every religious service used by any church, denomination, or person professing to be Christian.

And though "Fourth Party" Tories turned Bradlaugh's Atheist difficulties with the Parliamentary Oath into a gigantic source of obstruction, there were other important innovations undertaken by the Government in 1880 besides those already mentioned. They ranged from the resolve to give the London Radicals³ a Commission of Inquiry into the City Guilds to the proclamation of very large changes in the scope and aims of British foreign policy. Most important of all seemed at one stage the Irish policies announced by a Government containing Radical representatives who had an intense dislike of Coercion Bills and not a little sympathy for Irish agitation against "landlord oppres-

¹ Mundella's important Education Act (43 & 44 Vict., cap. 23) might also have been cited.

² This is Clause 6 of the 43 & 44 Vict., cap. 41, September 7, 1880.

³ Cf. J. F. B. Firth's *Reform of London Government and the City Guilds*, p. 92. Firth himself and Thorold Rogers were the leading spirits who had engaged, meanwhile, in pressing the Cabinet on towards the much larger idea of giving Londoners a directly elected Municipal Council for the whole Metropolis.

sion.”¹ Thus despite the “disloyal” language employed by Parnell when raising Land League funds among the Irish Americans in January 1880, despite the uneasiness of Dublin Castle at the mere suggestion of ending coercion, the Queen’s Speech of May 20th had announced that the Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act with its special repressive powers for the Irish Executive would not be renewed.² Then, again, after committing itself in this same Queen’s Speech to an “extension of the Irish borough franchise” intended to do better “justice to Ireland” than had seemed wise amid the Fenian “outrages” of 1867-8,³ the Cabinet went on during the Session to a “serious” new departure in regard to Irish landlordism. It was attempted to stay the evictions for non-payment of rent taking place in those parts of Ireland which were suffering most from “agricultural depression” by moving a Compensation for Disturbance Bill temporarily entitling the evicted to counter-claim for “improvements” up to a total of seven years’ rental.⁴

As is well known, the Conservatives strenuously denied the whole Government case for special action. And there was apparently something in their contention that Ministers were allowing themselves to be forced forward by unscrupulous Irish exaggerations of the number and effect of the evictions undertaken and the seriousness of the ensuing “lawlessness.”⁵

¹ Cf. Justin McCarthy’s *History of Our Own Times, 1880-1897*, p. 14, for the current House of Commons witticism which dubbed Dilke Attorney-General for the Irish Nationalist party and Chamberlain Solicitor-General.

² *The Times*, May 21st: “The Peace Preservation Act for Ireland expires on the first of June. You will not be asked to renew it. My desire to avoid the evils of exceptional legislation in abridgement of liberty would not induce me to forgo in any degree the first duty of my Government in providing for the security of life and property. But . . . I am persuaded that the loyalty and good sense of my Irish subjects will justify me in relying on the provisions of the ordinary law. . . .”

³ Cf. *Graphic*, May 29th, on “The Irish Franchise” for the mixed feelings of “moderates” when discussing the question: “. . . Under the new system a lower class of voters will be created in Ireland than any that exists in England. Still, there is some apparent injustice in the existing arrangement, and it is probably expedient that even the show of a grievance should be removed. . . . It would be unwise (however) to cherish extravagant expectations; and it would, perhaps, be better to look forward to a slight increase of our difficulties. The new class of voters will not support their Liberal benefactors; much less will they think of electing wicked Tories. The god of their idolatry is Mr. Parnell. . . .”

⁴ Cf. *Quarterly Review*, October 1880, pp. 588-603, for a furious Tory attack on the Bill.

⁵ Thus the *Quarterly Review*, October 1880 (p. 595), asserted that though Mr. Gladstone had claimed that, unless the Bill were passed, 15,000 people would be rendered homeless during the course of the year, 1,500 would have been nearer the truth. The Government assertion, again, that “in protecting

Ireland delays "Progress" 1880-1881

Certainly, a considerable number of Whig Peers headed by Earl Grey and Lord Lansdowne opposed the Government when the Bill came to the Lords, and the result was the shattering Ministerial defeat of August 3rd when the Second Reading was rejected by 282 votes against 51.

To have accepted such a "rebuff" tamely would only have been to ask for more. Accordingly Mr. Forster, Irish Secretary, was put up on August 5th to use fairly strong language about the Peers and their unwisdom. In addition, the Government made it plain that the Session would be continued through August and into September, if need were, in order to force the rest of the Government's programme through "Fourth Party" obstruction in the Commons and damaging amendment attempts in the Lords. Indignant Radicals, too, seem to have been encouraged to stage a "great demonstration" of protest against the troublesome Tory tactics in Lords and Commons. Here, for example, are the Resolutions of a "Preliminary Conference on Parliamentary Obstruction and the House of Lords held at the Westminster Palace Hotel, August 18, 1880."¹

1. That the habitual obstruction by the House of Lords of pressing reforms demanded by the nation and the mutilation by that assembly of measures, the principle of which it has been ultimately compelled by the pressure of public opinion to concede, are serious evils, which demand . . . such a Reform of the House of Lords as will place it on a representative basis.

2. That this Conference emphatically condemns the obstructive tactics pursued during the present Session by a small knot of malcontents in the House of Commons . . . and approves the determination of the Government to prolong the Session until those measures have become law.

3. That this Conference urges all Liberal Associations, Clubs, and other organisations to take measures for evoking, during the coming Autumn and Winter, a strong expression of opinion against such obstruction, and in support of effective legislation upon Land Tenure Reform, the Revision of the Land Tax, Local Self-Government for the Counties, the Game Laws, Reform of the House of Lords, Reform of London Government.

4. That this meeting expresses deep satisfaction and gratitude at the recovery of the Rt. Hon. W. E. Gladstone.

process-servers alone in the West Riding of Galway there were employed altogether, in 63 cases, 4,290 men" was attacked as grossly misleading since the total number of constables available had never been more than 850 (p. 596). To create an effect Gladstone, it was claimed, had counted the same men over and over again.

¹ From the printed *Report of a Preliminary Conference on Parliamentary Obstruction and the House of Lords*.

5. That this Conference hereby expresses its thanks to Mr. T. P. O'Connor for the motion of which he has given notice in the House of Commons . . . (a motion to abolish the House of Lords).

Though this kind of anti-Lords agitation succeeded in awaking some echoes in the country, it can hardly be pretended that Ministers had much reason to feel cheerful when Parliament was prorogued on September 7th. Their first Session had been no triumphant one, and more trouble clearly awaited them during the Recess when difficult Imperial decisions would need to be made under the scrutiny of Tories ready to denounce "Radical hatred of the Empire" as the mainspring of Government policy. How to evacuate Afghanistan without loss of prestige and leaving a reliable ally in charge; how to deal with the sullen Boers demanding a revocation of the Tory annexation of 1877; what attitude to take in regard to the growing Egyptian hostility to the results of the Anglo-French financial control; what methods to adopt in order to force the Turks to concede important "frontier rectifications" to Montenegro and Greece¹—all these presented problems enough. But Ireland was soon proving a more difficult problem than all the rest put together. The Lords' rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill had already caused an alarming revival of the worst kind of Irish obstructionism at Westminster during the concluding stages of the Session.² But much more alarming was the altogether freer rein which the indignant Irish Parliamentary party gave to its Land League oratory after returning to Ireland. The great spread of boycottry and worse could not but be connected with Parnell's famous admonition: "When a man takes a farm from which another has been evicted you must shun him . . . as if he were a leper of old."³ And the increasing readiness on the Irish part to resist eviction and evicters by force—a readiness most drastically in-

¹ The Gladstone Government had abandoned the traditional Foreign Office position of doing everything with a view to bolstering up "Ottoman integrity." Instead the Ministry was attempting to lead "the Concert of Europe" towards an "unselfish readiness to help the Balkan States to attain real independence.

² Cf. *Whitaker's Almanack* (1881), p. 228, for the worst day of obstruction, August 26th: "In Committee of Supply on the Irish votes," it relates, "the sitting was of 21 hours' duration, obstruction being offered at every stage by the Irish 'Irreconcilables.'"

³ Cf. Barry O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, pp. 185-6, for another rendering of this well-known Ennis speech of September 19th. The "shunning" of Captain Boycott, estate agent of Lord Erne, began on September 23rd.

stanced, perhaps, in the assassination of Lord Mountmorres in County Galway on September 25th¹—could easily be connected with passages in the speeches of Parnellite leaders like Dillon. Had not Dillon told the House of Commons itself that "for his own part it was not unlikely that when he returned to Ireland, if he found the notion acceptable, he would endeavour to organise rifle clubs, to arm the Irish people, and teach them how to shoot. It was a mistake to suppose that the Irish Disturbance Bill was a measure which would have satisfied the demands of the Irish people. . . ."²

The Cabinet was soon to be the scene of contention between Forster, the Irish Secretary, demanding an early Session of Parliament for the passage of a Peace Preservation Bill and more, and Chamberlain proposing to use the early Session instead for the enactment of the generous Irish Land Bill to which the Government was already committed. On the rejection of the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, Chamberlain had been in favour of reassembling Parliament after a short prorogation and forcing the Lords to accept the Bill, and now in his reluctance to consider coercion he was given some countenance by Bright and Gladstone. But after the Lord-Lieutenant's "proclamation" of Galway on October 8th had failed to stay the "outrages" and had been followed by the hardly more effective announcement of November 2nd that five Parnellite M.P.s and nine Land League leaders were to be prosecuted, the Cabinet situation grew steadily more strained. During the second half of November and in despite of another "terrible murder,"³ it seemed very likely that Chamberlain and Dilke would leave the Government and take Radicalism into opposition to Habeas Corpus Suspension and similar "remedies" for Irish disorder.

A difficult Cabinet compromise was finally effected⁴ on the basis of the reassembly of Parliament early in January 1881 to consider an Irish Land Bill and the constitution of elected Irish County Boards after Forster's Bill "for the Better Protection of Person and Property in Ireland" should have been carried. It is interesting to find, however, that an Ultra-Radical movement

¹ *Whitaker's Almanack* (1881), p. 233.

² *Quarterly Review*, October 1880, p. 601.

³ *Whitaker's Almanack* (1881), p. 234, for the murder of Henry Wheeler, a land agent, at Limerick, on November 12th.

⁴ *Garvin's Chamberlain*, i, 326-33.

of protest against coercion developed some persistency and power despite these concessions. If it is hardly surprising to find the leaders of London Radical Clubs declining to feel any marked detestation for the Irish Land League's campaign for paying landlords only "reasonable rents," it is certainly surprising to find them capable of keeping the Anti-Coercion movement connected with the *Radical* newspaper alive from December 4, 1880, to well beyond the fatal Phoenix Park murders of May 1882.¹ As it was this movement which helped Parliamentary Radicalism to insist that wrecking Tory amendments to the 1881 Land Bill should be refused even at the cost of a General Election, as it was this movement, too, which helped Chamberlain to win the Cabinet's authority to negotiate the famous but over-delayed "Kilmainham Treaty" of April 1882 with Parnell, a quotation illustrating the *Radical's* spirit becomes justifiable. Here are some verses from the issue of December 11, 1880:

JOHN BULL'S ADDRESS TO IRELAND

WAIT!

Wait! though your harvest is barren.
Wait! though you're turned out of doors.
Wait! though your children are beggars.
Wait! and forget you've had sores.

Wait! till we punish your leaders.
Wait! till you've paid up your rent.
Wait! till our counsels are ended.
Wait! and you'll never repent.

.
Wait! and your help is forthcoming—
I surely will come to your aid.
John Bull will never forsake you,
For charity's part of his trade.

For waiting myself I've a horror:
I must eat when my appetite craves.
You Irish, well seasoned to fasting,
If you starve you'll have peace in your graves!

It would seem plain that thanks to *Reynolds's* and the *National Reformer* the level of political sophistication attained by the

¹ Cf. F. W. Soutter's *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, pp. 99-127.

habitué of the Radical Clubs was higher than most writers on "the Victorian working man" are aware.

The almost unprecedented character of the 1881 Session has often been described. Here it must suffice to say that Irish obstruction of such persistence was undertaken that though Parliament was opened on January 6th, Forster's Coercion Bill was not, despite the adoption of special emergency procedure, carried through the Commons until February 25th and his Arms Bill not until March 11th. It had needed almost a constitutional revolution, undertaken by Government and Opposition in alliance, to accomplish such a result. This accounts, perhaps, for Gladstone's ability to order the abandonment of dearly bought Kandahar to Abdur Rahman, whom it was hoped to turn into a reliable Afghan ally, and of the Transvaal to the "rebel" Boer victors of Majuba without having to fear Conservative attack overmuch.

But this double Imperial "surrender," followed as it was by the further "surrender" to Bradlaugh alleged to be involved in the Cabinet resolution to introduce legislation permitting M.P.s to affirm instead of taking the Parliamentary Oath,¹ was not of a nature to make for amity between the Front Benches during the debates on the Premier's famous Irish Land Bill of 1881. This Bill to give Irish agricultural tenants Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, and Free Sale of Tenant-Right (not to mention generous opportunities for Treasury-assisted purchase of their holdings), was accounted so grave and ominous a breach of landlords' rights as to merit the most determined and obstinate opposition. Introduced on April 7th the Bill was not passed through all its stages in the House of Commons until July 29th. Taken to the Lords that very same day it found Lord Salisbury, who now led the Conservative Peers in place of the deceased Lord Beaconsfield, ready to allow an unopposed First Reading. The obvious ability of the Government to rally the "millions" in defence of the Bill clearly made the greatest caution necessary in arranging the Conservative strategy. A single mistake might well precipitate a General Election which the Radicals would endeavour to turn into a plebiscite for the "Abolition of the House of Lords."

¹ Gladstone made the announcement on April 29, 1881, after Bradlaugh, re-elected for Northampton on April 9th, had been repeatedly refused permission to take his seat by a combination of Tories and "religious" Liberals.

Accordingly the Peers finally decided to allow the Bill an unopposed Second Reading also. They had already resolved on a virtually complete frustration of the Bill's objects in Committee, and meanwhile these disarming preliminaries promised greatly to weaken the effect of the inevitable Radical summons to "the people" to "stand firm."

There followed a crisis short but very serious. The Lords made many vital alterations in the Bill for the sake of the landlords,¹ and though the Prime Minister, anxious not to be forced into the "Lords versus People" struggle which would have delighted the Radicals, treated the Lords' amendments with politeness, he yet refused to accept any major changes of principle. To have done so, indeed, while the Parnellites were denouncing the Bill as ludicrously inadequate, would have been completely to surrender all hopes of pacifying an Ireland already subjected to the rude operation of the Coercion Bills of "Buckshot Forster."² On Friday, August 12th, nevertheless, the Tory Peers, abandoned though they now were by their Whig allies, insisted on restoring their amendments, and Lord Salisbury, their leader, even ventured to challenge an election. This was but to play into the hands of the Radicals of the National Liberal Federation, as was soon made plain by the events of the ensuing few days. Here is one "moderate" summary of what followed: "The slogan was sounded. Deputations from the chief Liberal Associations from John O'Groat's to Land's End held counsel together on Monday at the Westminster Palace Hotel: and in every borough of note the signal was given for an energetic campaign against the stand made by the House of Lords."³

Though the situation would have been a most promising one in the hands of a Radical Prime Minister intent on "settling accounts with the Lords," Gladstone, of course, was no such Prime Minister. Anxious as ever to save the Lords from the

¹ Such as those declaring the sale of tenant-right void when no preliminary notice should have been given to the landlord; excluding from the Bill estates on which it was claimed that the permanent improvements had been made by the landlord or his immediate predecessors; prohibiting a tenant, without the landlord's written consent, from subdividing his holding or sub-letting, and peremptorily prohibiting him from building fresh houses, etc.; limiting tenant's maximum compensation to £250, etc., etc.

² Cf. *Illustrated London News*, July 30th, for illustrations of the activity at Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin, and the police-stations of "proclaimed" districts.

³ *Illustrated London News*, August 20th.

effects of their own mistakes, he ignored Radical¹ and Parnellite demands for an outright and contumelious rejection of the represented amendments of the Upper House and proceeded once more to take them one by one and to offer an occasional concession. Thus "wild duck, widgeon, and teal" were added to the game reserved to landlords, and landlords were also given the right to invoke the inquiries of the new Land Court despite the heated opposition of the Parnellites who wanted the right of access to the Court to be confined to tenants. These tactics of Gladstone proved successful. When the Bill was returned to the Lords after this firm but courteous handling, Lord Salisbury's readiness for a fight was found to have evaporated.² Instead of blocking its way to the Statute Book he led a chorus of Peers who hoped that, now the Government Bill was being accepted, tenancies would alter their attitude to their landlords and Ministers would enforce "law and order" with a strong hand both against Fenian inciters of "outrage" and the Land League.

A Session dominated by two such strongly combated pieces of legislation as the Coercion Act and the Land Act was hardly one which permitted much extra to be undertaken beyond the routine Supply Business and the bare minimum of non-contentious Bills urgently required by the Government Departments. Apart from the Irish Land Act, indeed, "progress" was virtually confined to the Abolition of Flogging in the Army and Navy. The Bill to set up elected County Councils in Ireland,³ for example, was abandoned before the end of the Session despite the hopes which had been cherished that moderate opinion in Ireland might come to accept it as a substitute for full "Home Rule." The Bill to put Vote by Ballot on a permanent instead of a temporary basis was abandoned also, as was the Bill with which it had been hoped to end, once and for all, that wide prevalence of corrupt electoral practices still amply demonstrated in the petitions that had been brought after the 1880 Election. Finally, the Affirmation

¹ It was Alexander Macdonald, "Labour" M.P. for Stafford and President of the Miners' Association, who opened the attempt to secure such an outright rejection of the Lords' amendments. (See *The Times*, August 16th, for the scenes of August 15th.)

² Cf. S. H. Jeyes, *Life and Times of Lord Salisbury*, iii, 210, however, for proof that personally Salisbury would have persisted but that he was held back by the apprehensions of others.

³ It had been put down in the Queen's Speech of January 6th as one of the aims of the Session.

Bill for Bradlaugh was dropped despite the ugly scenes provoked on August 3rd by Bradlaugh's action inside the House and that of his crowds of East End sympathisers outside.¹

In spite of the varied and not always propitious course of events since he had taken office in April 1880, the close of the 1881 Session undoubtedly found Gladstone's position stronger than it had been a year before. The determination with which he had worn down Parnellite obstruction from the one flank and Tory and "Fourth Party" obstruction from the other, the legislative sweep and grasp of his great Irish Land Bill, and the counterpart its "benevolence" made to the "law and order" firmness of the Coercion Bill—all this called out the genuine admiration of what was to all appearances the great majority of the nation.

But actually this widespread tendency towards a hero worship of Gladstone was to have dangers of its own for the Government. Thus Bright already seems to have allowed himself to lapse into his later permanent hostility towards the Parnellites because of his objections to the obstacles Parnell had put in the way of Gladstone's "healing" efforts and for a time Chamberlain, too,² like all the other prominent Radical leaders except Cowen shared these sentiments. In this mood neither the genuine deficiencies of the Irish Land Act nor the real Irish suspicions as to the character of the future Land tribunals were likely to receive fair attention even from accredited Radicals. As to "public opinion" of a more "moderate" type—this, free from the haunting doubts that sometimes beset men like Chamberlain, Morley, or Dilke when reviewing the Irish question, had the simplest explanations to advance for the Parnellite objections to the course of Gladstonian legislation in 1881. Here is one typical specimen:³

"The reasons for this perverse ingratitude," wrote the *Illustrated London News*, "... are not far to seek. The clique of Irish Irreconcilables ... desire a peaceful and prosperous Ireland far less than a successful Land League agitation. Their clients are not their fellow-countrymen, but the fire-eating Irish Americans who supply the sinews of war. ... To obstruct the business of the Imperial Parliament is not so much a sad necessity as part of their deliberate tactics ... to advertise them-

¹ Cf. Headingley's *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, p. 186, for Bradlaugh's telling the police-inspector who led the party which forcibly ejected him "that he could come back with force enough to gain admittance." See also *The Times* and *Daily News*, August 4th.

² Cf. Garvin's *Chamberlain*, i, 339.

³ *Illustrated London News*, August 27, 1881.

Ireland delays "Progress" 1880-1881

selves before their Irish patrons in the United States. . . . The two days engrossed by them last week in the House of Commons, when every hour was precious, in denouncing the Coercion Acts, and the superfluous waste of time at the extra sitting on Saturday in once again baiting the Chief Secretary, who has so zealously laboured to make perfect the remedial measure of the Session, were the last impotent acts of a graceless faction whose intolerable despotism is slipping away. Next year—we hope with the cordial assent of all parties—their power for mischief will be curtailed, and an effectual remedy be provided against . . . obstruction. . . .”

Bright and Gladstone, in fact, had already committed themselves to opening the 1882 Session with a determined effort to carry vital changes of procedure in the Commons intended to muzzle the Parnellites.¹ Meanwhile they saw, with steadily growing anger, the hundreds of arrests already executed under the Coercion clauses completely failing to stay the Land League's ever growing power and its niggling depreciation of the Land Act. Gladstone's temper overflowed in a well-known speech delivered to a great Leeds audience on October 7th and quoted at the head of this chapter. He had just received the most convincing proofs of the enthusiastic attachment of the "millions." At every considerable station on his road from Hawarden to Leeds—at Stockport, Ash Bridge, Ashton-under-Lyne, Staleybridge, Huddersfield, Dewsbury, and Batley—thousands had assembled to cheer as his special train steamed by. On his arrival, Leeds had gone *en fête*,² and the *fête* seems to have lasted continuously from the Thursday evening of his coming to the great culminating speechmakings of the following Saturday when a vast "popular" audience of 25,000 was crammed into the Leeds Cloth Hall to hear British democracy's favourite statesman. It is, perhaps, hardly surprising to find that Gladstone, surrounded by such manifestations, gave a final public warning to Parnell. When Parnell retorted with a charge that the Leeds speaking on Ireland had been unscrupulous and dishonest, his arrest was ordered amid almost universal approval on the British side of St. George's Channel. "The Radicals, even the Labour representatives," we are told,³ "praised the Government for its vigour. Mr. Broadhurst, for instance, said

¹ *The Times*, August 8th, for their Mansion House speeches of August 6th.

² *Illustrated London News*, October 15, 1881, has some remarkable pictures. There were extensive illuminations—a few of them with the new electric light—and a torchlight procession of 3,000 torchbearers.

³ S. H. Jeyes's *Life and Times of Lord Salisbury*, iii, 214.

he would rather have a thousand Parnells arrested than that the 'starving Irish people' should be withheld from the 'blessings which the Legislature had conferred.' "

Nor is it possible to find much Radical change of tone even after the Land League had been suppressed and its leaders imprisoned following on their issue of a "no rent manifesto" in reprisal for Parnell's arrest. Perhaps Chamberlain's address of October 25th to the National Liberal Federation meeting at Liverpool was the friendliest to Ireland of all the prominent political speeches made at this time. Probably the unanimity with which Conservatives were soon marking him down as "the evil genius of the Cabinet"¹ had some relation to his Liverpool speaking and his promise to Irishmen that "your wishes shall be our guide, your prejudices shall be by us respected, your interests shall be our interests." Yet even Chamberlain seemed adamant on the immediate practical issues facing the politicians.²

"I say to Ireland," he declared, "what the Liberals and Republicans of the North said to the Southern States of America: 'the Union must be preserved.' (Cheers.) You cannot, and you shall not destroy it. (Cheers.) Within these limits there is nothing which you may not ask and hope to obtain. But if this is our decision, the Government is bound to put down revolution, whether it takes the form of an uprising of men in arms, or whether it is a veiled and cloaked and insidious disguise and aims at destroying the Government by subverting law and by promoting a special anarchy and disorganisation. (Cheers.)"

¹ *The Times*, November 17th, reporting Cross, Tory ex Home Secretary, speaking at Warrington. Salisbury had denounced Chamberlain just previously.

² *Illustrated London News*, October 29, 1881.

THE SESSIONS OF 1882 AND 1883

"I deeply grieve to think that just at the time when the Government had run a risk in introducing a new policy . . . when the expectation seemed to be universal that all outrage would cease in Ireland in response to the changed attitude of the Government, this terrible event should occur, and dash our hopes to the ground. After what has now occurred, I wish to God I had never left Portland. Where was the motive for the crime? Its commission is . . . one of the most disastrous blows that have been sustained during the last century by the national cause in Ireland. . . ."

MICHAEL DAVITT *to the Press Association reporters after the Phoenix Park murders of May 6, 1882.*

"There is no principle that enters more deeply into our social life than this—that every man should pay his debts to the utmost of his ability. If a man can say—I will not pay my debts according to the law and practice of the country, but will go behind hedges and shoot at my creditor, and burn his house down, and make the country too hot to hold him—and if the Legislature offers such a man release from his obligations as a bribe to keep the peace—an evil example is set which strikes at a principle that is at the root of our prosperity, the only principle in which industry and capital can work together. . . ."

LORD SALISBURY *on the Arrears of Rent Bill, August 7, 1882.*

"Lord Salisbury cares nothing for the bulk of the Irish nation. He calls for vengeance upon the criminals who have been guilty of outrage and violence, and so far I am with him. But then he stops there. He has no sympathy—at least he expresses none—for the great mass of the population, whether of loyal Ulster or the three other provinces of Ireland, who have been subjected to undeniable tyranny and oppression, and whose wrongs cry aloud for redress. He can express to you in eloquent terms his sympathy for the Irish landlords, who have had to submit to a reduction of 25 per cent in their rents, but I find nowhere any expression of sympathy for poor tenants who, for years, under the threat of eviction, and the pressure of starvation, have paid those unjust rents levied on their own improvements, and extorted from their desperate toil and poverty. I say that in this matter as in so many others, Lord Salisbury constitutes himself the spokesman of a class—of the class to which he himself belongs—'who toil not, neither do they spin,' whose

fortunes, as in his case, have originated in grants made long ago, for such services as courtiers render kings—and have since grown and increased while their owners slept, by the levy of an unearned share on all that other men have done by toil and labour to add to the general wealth and prosperity of the country. . . .”

CHAMBERLAIN at *Birmingham*, March 30, 1883.

THOUGH a winter when the number of Irish Coercion arrests was steadily mounting was no very cheerful time for Radicals, hope inevitably attached itself to the meeting of Parliament for the 1882 Session. The Queen's Speech of February 7th proved, in fact, a far from discouraging document, indicating as it did that the Government was not so preoccupied with its Irish difficulties and its anti-obstruction proposals as to forget the need of placating the Radicals by offering some “political advance” in the Sessional programme. Elected County Governments, “the extension of Municipal Government to the Metropolis at large,” the repression of Corrupt Practices at Elections, Reform of Scottish Entail, improved Education in Wales¹—these were the principal good things on which the Government promised to introduce legislation.

Actually the Session was to prove a gloomy and almost fruitless one. Opening with a renewed Government failure to persuade the Commons majority to let Bradlaugh have his seat,² it rapidly saw the development of a serious dispute between the Cabinet and the Lords. Taking the view that the new Irish Land tribunals were not doing justice to the landlords, the Conservative majority in the Upper House determined to set up a Select Committee of Inquiry.³ This course was vigorously reprobated by the Government, and certainly it promised to reawaken in full vigour all the Irish suspicions of England which, it was hoped, the Land Act had allayed. Full Radical support was, of course, offered to the Government on this issue, and when on March 9th the combined forces of “progress” in the Commons defeated the Conservative

¹ *Hansard*, February 7th.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, February 17th.

defenders of the Lords by 303 votes against 219 the worst repercussions of the Lords' action on Ireland were avoided.

But much valuable time had been lost on the subject, and in addition it was already plain that the Government's anti-obstruction resolutions were going to produce altogether longer debating than had been hoped at first. Not only was Irish obstruction inevitable against the Government's plans to make it impossible for the future but Conservatives, too, showed an understandable readiness to throw the Government's Sessional Time Table out of gear and so to prevent any "progress" being conceded to the Radicals at all. Thus though the Government had proposed its first Procedure Resolution as early as February 20th,¹ the first objection to it was so long and so copiously debated that it was not disposed of until March 30th, and then only in a Division of 318 against 279. There were, of course, still further objections, and even on May 1st the Government, though procuring the defeat of some of them, was once again compelled to see the debate adjourned with the first Resolution still uncarried.

But a "new departure" had meanwhile taken place on Irish affairs, and for a brief space there were the brightest hopes of an agreed settlement with the Parnellites which should clear the way for the resumption of "progress" all round. Having received an Irish overture Chamberlain, with the consent of the Cabinet, had opened a famous negotiation. As early as April 23rd he was promised that "Mr. Parnell will advise all tenants to pay rents and will denounce outrages, resistance to law and all processes of intimidation, whether by boycotting or in any other way,"² if the Government consented to his plan of making the 1881 Land Act usable by Ireland's most distressed classes. Masses of the Irish peasantry, it appeared, with rent arrears incurred before May 1, 1881, had been left liable to ejection and without protection from the Land Act. Not only the Radical Chamberlain, but Gladstone himself was prepared to go a long way in accepting Parnell's further contention that: "No plan of dealing with arrears will be satisfactory which does not wipe them off compulsorily

¹ The Resolution giving the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees the right to stop debate at discretion and to take a vote. The issue was to be deemed settled if the majority contained more than 200 members or the minority fewer than 40.

² Evidence of Capt. O'Shea before the Parnell Commission, October 31, 1888.

by a composition—one-third payable by the tenant, one-third by the State—from the Church Fund or some other source—and one-third remitted by the landlord, but so that the contribution of the tenant and the State shall not exceed one year's rent each—the balance, if any, to be remitted by the landlord."

Certainly the Whig Earl Cowper was allowed to resign from the Irish Viceroyalty¹ rather than that an arrears settlement with the Parnellites should be blocked, and more still was preparing. Having asked, apparently, for still further "law and order" assurances to put before the Cabinet, Chamberlain elicited the following additional message from Parnell:²

If the arrears question be settled upon the lines indicated by us, I have every confidence—a confidence shared by my colleagues—that the exertions which we should be able to make strenuously and unremittingly would be effective in stopping outrages and intimidation of all kinds. . . . It is unnecessary for me to dwell upon the enormous advantage to be derived from the full extension of the purchase clauses, which now seems practically to have been adopted by all parties. The accomplishment of the programme I have sketched out to you would, in my judgement, be regarded by the country as a practical settlement of the Land Question and would, I feel sure, enable us to co-operate cordially for the future with the Liberal party in forwarding Liberal principles and measures of general reform. . . ."

Despite Forster's protest and resignation the Cabinet now considered that it had sufficient warrant to make a beginning with emptying the prisons of the six hundred and more Irish suspects detained under the Coercion Act. Nor could the "new departure" have been heralded more significantly than by the release of Parnell and two fellow M.P.s on May 2nd and the remarkable Government declaration made in Parliament on the same day. Ministers then announced that there would be no renewal of the 1881 Coercion Act and that legislation would be submitted dealing with the difficult problem of Irish rent-arrears, incurred before the passage of the Land Act, as well as expanding the tenant-purchase facilities offered by that Act.³ The Whig uneasiness and

¹ The appointment of his successor, Earl Spencer, was announced on April 28th.

² This, too, comes from Capt. O'Shea's evidence before the Parnell Commission, October 31, 1888. O'Shea was a Home Rule M.P., and was acting as intermediary between the Government and Parnell, then imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol. Part of the text of this message Parnell attempted to withhold from Parliament (*Hansard*, May 15, 1882).

³ *Hansard*, May 2nd, Gladstone,

Conservative bitterness over this "ignominious surrender to the Land League" may well be imagined.¹ Undoubtedly it played some part in inducing Gladstone to offer the vacant and vital Irish Secretaryship not to Chamberlain, the Radical, but to Lord Frederick Cavendish, the Whig. Perhaps this see-sawing between Whig and Radical seemed less statesmanlike when it was learnt how on Saturday evening, May 6th, the new Secretary and his Under-Secretary had been done to death by terrorists in Phoenix Park, Dublin.²

After the horror excited by the Phoenix Park murders it was inevitable that the Session should take another unexpected turn. Despite the universal condemnation of the outrage organised in Ireland by the Parnellites,³ despite Chamberlain's consistent opposition in the Cabinet, a Government Coercion Bill was drafted more severe than any other in history. And though trial by jury, the right of public meeting, the freedom of the Press, and even the liberty of private movement were left exposed to the arbitrary decisions of Dublin Castle, Parnell was asked to show his gratitude for the Government decision still to proceed with the Irish Arrears Bill by refraining from more than nominal opposition. "Public opinion" was undoubtedly mistaken in attempting to impose such impossible conditions on the Irish Parliamentary party. Certainly much of the Parnellite readiness for hearty co-operation with British Liberalism must have evaporated by the time the long and bitter Irish struggle against the "Prevention of Crime Bill" was finally overcome on July 7th.

That Gladstone's political strategy, however, was justified by the state of "public opinion" seems to be proved not only by Chamberlain and Dilke refraining from resignation but by the comparative ease with which the Arrears of Rent Bill was forced upon the Lords once the Prevention of Crime Bill had been carried. Despite the diversion of newspaper attention just then from Ireland to the strong measures being undertaken against Arabi Pasha and the Egyptian Nationalists, Gladstone declined to allow the Lords to make any amendments of note in the Arrears

¹ *Hansard*, May 2nd, Goschen, Northcote, Chaplin, Gibson.

² The assassinations were not traced to their authors for a considerable time, but this apparent mysteriousness only increased the public's horror.

³ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, May 13th, for the placarding of Dublin and other cities of Ireland with a manifesto signed by Parnell, Dillon, and Davitt, which expressed "in the strongest possible language" their grief and horror at the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke.

of Rent Bill. On August 8th a Committee of the Commons was appointed to draw up reasons for dissenting from the Lords, and on August 10th Lord Salisbury, though still protesting that the measure was one of "simple robbery"¹ of the landowners, withdrew the Conservative amendments and prevented the development of a dangerous political crisis. But it was a sorry triumph after all. None of the "progressive measures" promised to the Radicals in the Queen's Speech of February 7th had been carried, and if on August 18th the Houses were adjourned to October 24th, it was made quite plain that this unusual plan for the resumption of the Session was mainly intended to allow the Commons to finish their anti-obstruction business. "Progress" was once again condemned to wait, this time until the opening of the 1883 Session.

But there were causes at work tending for the rest of the duration of the 1880 Parliament to help the Radical advocates of "progress" in asserting themselves more successfully. Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*, for example, seemed for a time likely to inaugurate as epoch-making a crusade against the landlord class as Paine's *Rights of Man* had done ninety years before. Certainly its influence will be found to have extended from the plebeian Ultra-Radicals of Hyndman's Democratic Federation to the august Whitehall and Fleet Street circles inhabited by Chamberlain, Dilke, and Morley. Then it was not merely American Radicalism which was serving to restimulate that of Great Britain. The anti-clerical and anti-monarchical Radicalism which obtained increasing control of the France of Jules Ferry and the Gambettists had its sympathetic students in England.² Meanwhile the Radical Clubs and the Democratic Federation may be found watching with interest not only the struggle of German Social Democracy against Bismarck but the extremer movements connected with the revival of a *Communard* party in France and the penetration of Anarchism throughout the most belligerent sections of the workmen of Europe and America.³ All these extremist movements were, of course, the outcome of the almost continuous "bad times" which had been ruling since 1873 and they represented the increasing protest of the working classes

¹ *Hansard*, August 10th, Salisbury (Lords).

² Dilke was a personal friend of Gambetta's, who by the time of his death, be it added, was almost a "moderate" compared with Clemenceau.

³ The Lyons Anarchist trials of January 1883 made a considerable sensation.

against the level of physical and moral degradation to which the existing social and industrial systems allowed vast numbers among them to be condemned. What this level of degradation was even in wealthy and charitable London the shocked devotees of church and chapel were before long to learn in the famous *Bitter Cry of Outcast London*.¹ When this dreadful revelation came, indeed, even Lord Salisbury² was moved to lay aside his fears of encouraging "State Socialism" and to press for prompt action on the housing of the working classes.

To return, however, to the immediate Ministerial programme for the 1883 Session, it is worth observing how the National Reform Union's demand for some "progress,"³ the Farmers' Alliance claim for some legislation for the British farmer on recent Irish models,⁴ and the continued pressure of the London Municipal Reform League for the creation of a great London Municipality, all found recognition in the Queen's Speech. As Dilke, moreover, had just entered the Cabinet to sit beside Chamberlain it is possible that the two Radical allies might have forced more into the Cabinet agenda had they had a mind. The entire "Labour" movement, for example, from the Trades Union Congress to the Democratic Federation could have been rallied to support pressure for immediate Parliamentary Reform, and further help could have been obtained not merely from the National Reform Union and the more recently founded London and Counties Liberal Union but from the Irish Parnellites. The powerful Liberation Society, again, had multitudes of smaller projects to press on the Radical Ministers pending a chance of moving forward to its principal objectives. The Abolition of Church and Manse Rates in Scotland, for instance,⁵ was regarded by Liberationist Dissenters as overdue, and in England the heartiest farming support had long been promised to the Liberationist plan for abolishing Extraordinary Tithe.⁶

¹ Published October 1883.

² See his article in the *National Review* for November 1883.

³ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, January 27th, and *Manchester Guardian*, January 24th.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, February 10th, for the eagerness with which farmers had seized upon a passage of Chamberlain's Swansea speech of February 1, 1883.

⁵ Cf. *Liberator*, November 1, 1881, for petitioning to Lord Rosebery and the Lord Advocate to promote such a Bill.

⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, October 1, 1881, for the agitation of Kent and Sussex hop-growers against this impost. The farmers' own suggested heads for a Bill are in the *Liberator* for November 1st.

After some little argument, nevertheless, the two¹ Cabinet Radicals apparently agreed that the 1883 Session would best be devoted to a fairly modest programme. It was, of course, plain that if there could be a clearance of those "arrears" of legislation which had been allowed to accumulate owing to Parliament's great preoccupation with Ireland in 1881 and 1882, the 1884 Session could be more conveniently earmarked for a great plan of Parliamentary Reform. On this basis it was that the 1883 Sessional programme was drawn up. Even then, needless to say, much of the proposed legislation failed to be pushed through to the Statute Book against the obstacles presented by the cumbersome forms of Parliament and the increasing Conservative disposition to follow Lord Randolph Churchill and Parnell in making use of them to embarrass the Government.

Yet the 1883 Session, like that of 1880, has had but scant justice rendered to it or to the importance of the novel legislative principles which were inscribed on the Statute Book during its course. The heroic Corrupt Practices Act² was, for instance, the first measure adequately planned to deal a fatal blow to the grossly excessive and corrupt election expenditure which had vitiated many Radical expectations since 1832. Henceforth it was impossible to undertake the indirect bribery of half a small borough or more by employing swarms of polling agents, clerks, and messengers; by renting unlimited numbers of committee rooms especially in public-houses; and by hiring all the available traps, gigs, and conveyances in the place. Candidates were in future to be allowed only one polling (personation) agent per polling station and only one clerk or messenger per five hundred voters, and in both cases the acceptance of the candidate's pay involved disfranchisement. There was to be no hiring of vehicles by the candidate

¹ Bright had resigned in July 1882 rather than sanction the bombardment of Alexandria.

² Cf. Emanuel's *Corrupt Practices at Elections* (2nd edition, 1881) for the need: "The Reports of the Commission appointed in 1880 have not yet been published, but the proceedings have been recorded from day to day in the newspapers, and they certainly form a most disgraceful narrative. . . . It has been shown that much more money was spent throughout the country by the Conservative than by the Liberal candidates. . . . A large grant from a central fund subscribed at the Junior Carlton Club . . . found its way to Oxford, one of the most corrupt places in the Kingdom. . . . Learned professors assisted at these corrupt rites. . . . At Boston, 1,200 men were employed, and £500 was paid for cab-hire alone. At Chester, 480 messengers were employed; at Gloucester, 158 messengers, 82 clerks, and a whole army of boys carrying boards. . . . The hands of the Liberals are not too clean. . . ." (pp. 15-18).

The Sessions of 1882 and 1883

for the purpose of conveying voters to the poll nor gifts of the railway fare to the voter at a distance. Hired committee rooms were limited to one per five hundred voters in the boroughs (with a slightly different arrangement for the counties) and such committee rooms could never be located in public-houses. Finally, a limit was put on the amount of money disburseable by a candidate even on permitted expenditure, though the amounts allowed in a Bill that was to pass the gauntlet of the Lords and Commons of 1883 would be regarded by modern eyes as still leaving wealth overmuch opportunity of beating down opponents by sheer money (and carriage-borrowing) power.¹

Then the Agricultural Holdings Acts for England and Scotland² had gone some way to satisfying farmers that the Government meant, if it could, to begin the work of protecting them from landlord caprice or oppression. Thus it was now to become impossible for a farmer to be deprived of his right to "compensation for unexhausted improvements" by seeking to force him to "contract out" of the Act as a condition of tenancy. Such a condition of tenancy was to be completely invalid, and a limit was also placed on the landlord's right of levying "distress" by seizing on his tenant's stock for arrears of rent. The Temperance Radicals, again, who had already won important successes in this Parliament, obtained an Act "to prohibit the Payment of Wages in Public-Houses and certain other places,"³ and "Labour" obtained Mr. Chamberlain's Patents Act to facilitate the path of the poor inventor. The Factories and Workshops Act of 1883 also contained some notable extensions of principle in regard to the protection of those engaged in dangerous trades.⁴ And finally Professor

¹ This was especially the case in the county divisions, the strongholds of the landed, where for a (British) division with under 2,000 electors, £650 of expenditure was permitted, for one with 2,000-3,000 electors £710, for one with 3,000-4,000 electors £770, and so on by increments of £60 per 1,000 electors. Thus each candidate for S.W. Lancs was apparently entitled to spend £2,110, apart from personal expenses and polling-booth costs. In Manchester the figure would have been £1,910 on a scale for (British) boroughs which began with £350 for 2,000 electors or under and mounted by £30 per 1,000 electors.

² The 46 & 47 Vict., caps. 61 and 62. There was another struggle with the Lords before they were put on the Statute Book. (See especially *Hansard*, August 21, 22, and 24, 1883.)

³ The 46 & 47 Vict., cap. 31.

⁴ The 46 & 47 Vict., cap. 53, had the following conditions scheduled for the white-lead factory owner to fulfil:

(a) All stacks and stoves in the factory must be efficiently ventilated.

(b) There must be provided for the use of the persons employed . . . suffi-

Bryce's Bill "to provide for the better application and management of the Parochial Charities of the City of London" was the first carried to the Statute Book which seemed to offer London Radicals some assurance that City opposition to metropolitan reform was not necessarily insurmountable.

The Liberation Society, indeed, affected to be so confident that a London Municipality was about to be set up in despite of the City that it scolded Professor Bryce for the bargain he had made with Churchmen in order to enable him to legislate at all.¹ So that he might free the non-ecclesiastical charities of the City parishes, and make them available to finance polytechnics and purchase open spaces for the common good of all Londoners, Professor Bryce, though a Liberationist himself, had agreed to allow surplus City ecclesiastical charities to be made usable by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for Church extension in London. This was not a settlement, urged the Liberation Society, that would commend itself to the London Municipality which the Cabinet was more than ever pledged to create in the 1884 Session seeing the reason for the abandonment of the London Government Bill of 1883. The Liberation Society, in fact, had rarely been as pugnacious and as confident as it was during 1883. Scottish and Welsh² Disestablishment agitations were in full swing, and English farmers and farm labourers³ alike were showing the most hopeful interest in Liberationist suggestions of what might be done for them if the Anglican grip on the tithe revenues could be relaxed. The Parliamentary Session, too, had yielded

cient means of frequently washing hands and feet; with a sufficient supply of hot and cold water, soap, towels, and brushes.

- (c) There must be provided in addition for the use of women employed . . . sufficient baths with a sufficient supply of hot and cold water, soap, towels, and brushes.
- (d) There must be provided . . . (but not in any part of the factory where any work is carried on) a proper room for meals.
- (e) There must be provided for every person working at any tank an overall suit with head covering, and for every person working at any white-bed a respirator, and for every person . . . at any dry stove or rollers an overall suit with head covering and a respirator. . . .
- (f) There must be accessible to all persons employed . . . a sufficient supply of acidulated drink.

¹ Cf. *The National Church*, September 1883, for extensive treatment and quotation.

² Cf. *Tarian y Gweithiwr*, May 23, 1883, for the attitude of the Welsh vernacular Press, already an important element in the struggle.

³ Arch's *Agricultural Labourers' Chronicle* was unceasingly critical of the Church. One of his suggestions was to turn the parsonages into almshouses for the aged and to finance them from the tithes.

the Liberation Society one specially delightful moment during the course of 1883. After the usual victories in the Commons, a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill had actually been carried through Second Reading in the Lords in a Division of 165 against 158, the Prince of Wales and his brother, the Duke of Albany, making part of the majority overthrowing the inflexible Anglican bigots of the Marriage Law Defence Union. When the bigots rallied and triumphed at Third Reading by 145 votes against 140, the Liberation Society can be excused if its pamphlets promptly hastened to pillory the Bishops for the part they had played in the whole affair.¹

While the 1883 Session was still taking its course, Radical preparations were already well under way for a great agitation during the Recess which should more than suffice to "get steam up" for vigorous law-making in 1884. As early as May the National Liberal Federation had called for a new Franchise Bill in 1884,² and in order to keep the Federation's point of view well in the Cabinet's mind preparations were begun for a great Conference to be held in Leeds during October, the time when the Cabinet's legislative programme for 1884 would be taking definite shape. Meanwhile other significant Radical plans for forcing the legis-

¹ Cf. the pamphlet entitled *The Votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords*.

The Liberationist view of the 1883 Session is thus set forth in the *Liberator* of September 1883:

The Session of 1883.—"As regards the cause of religious equality, we are obliged to admit that the advance made, so far as legislative measures are concerned, has been but slight. The only two successes are in connexion with private bills for abolishing vexatious local ecclesiastical imposts—viz., Vicar's Rates in Trinity Parish, Coventry, and Church Rates in St. Saviour's, Southwark. The burials question has moved forward to this extent . . . that the Home Secretary has now publicly pledged the Government to see what can be done. . . . And Sir W. Harcourt's promise may, we take it, be considered to include the question of burial fees. . . . The abolition of extraordinary tithe is another piece of work to be included in the Government programme of next session; and we assume that the Scotch Universities Bill will not only be brought in again, but carried, and that the abolition of the ecclesiastical tests in the Scotch Universities will follow. We regret the defeat of the Parliamentary Oaths Bill (for Bradlaugh), not only because, if carried, it would have put an end to one of the few remaining ecclesiastical disqualifications for civil office; but because of the division of opinion and the confusion which the question has occasioned in the ranks of those who are usually agreed in relation to such matters. The struggle, with all its bitterness, has unfortunately to be renewed; but we suppose that no one has a doubt as to the ultimate result. The rejection of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, by a narrow majority in the House of Lords, after the second reading had been carried, is, no doubt, a great disappointment. . . . But though the loss of another year will in some quarters be seriously felt, the delay is favourable to the cause of Disestablishment. . . ."

² Cf. H. Jephson, *The Platform*, ii, 526.

lative pace were being put into execution. Of these the most remarkable, in some respects, was the issue in successive numbers of the *Fortnightly Review* of the full demands about to be made by Radicalism. This famous *Radical Programme*,¹ inspired by Chamberlain and Morley, and thus issued, was not completed until 1884. But its first sections, put before the public in the *Fortnightly* numbers for August, September, and October 1883, made a veritable political sensation, as well they might seeing that it was almost certain that the National Liberal Federation could be committed to them. That Manhood Suffrage, Equal Electoral Districts, and Payment of Members should have been demanded in August, and that in September full-blooded Ultra-Radicalism in politics should have been combined with what alarmed "moderates" called "State Socialism"² might well seem a portentous political development. Conservative orators were soon adjuring their audiences to rally while there was yet time against Chamberlain and his party of "Violence, Socialism, and Infidelity."³

Despite the alarm of the "moderates" and the oratorical transports of the Conservatives, the Radical plans developed most promisingly. Thus a great meeting of September 22nd on Newcastle Town Moor, graced by the presence of three local "advanced" M.P.s, headed by Morley,⁴ and addressed also by Bradlaugh and the "Labour" M.P., Henry Broadhurst, prepared the Franchise ground well for the great Leeds Conference due in the following month. This Conference, too, when it came was regarded as a great success, and certainly it was no light matter that delegates from five hundred Liberal Associations should have demanded a far-reaching Franchise Extension Bill for 1884, to be followed by a Redistribution Bill which should make every voter of equal weight in the State. Nor was this all. The Con-

¹ The *Radical Programme*, begun in the August, September, and October numbers of the *Fortnightly*, was continued in November with Part IV on the Agricultural Labourer, in January 1884 with Part V on Free Schools, in May 1884 with Part VI on Religious Equality advocating Disestablishment and Disendowment, etc. When during 1885 the *Radical Programme* was issued as a bound volume there were nine sections in all.

² Cf. *Illustrated London News*, September 8th.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, October 20th, for Sir Hardinge Giffard (later Lord Halsbury and Lord Chancellor) at Launceston, October 13th.

⁴ The others were James of Gateshead and Stevenson of South Shields. Morley had entered Parliament for Newcastle earlier in the year with a great national reputation already made.

ference stressed also the urgency of London Government Reform and of substituting elected local councils to undertake local administration in the counties in place of the J.P.s. And John Bright, whose presence at the Conference contributed markedly to its success, may be found suggesting to the delegates what should be done if the Lords attempted to defeat or delay Franchise Extension.¹ The great "Tribune of the People" was prepared to urge that the opportunity should be taken to limit the Lords' power once and for all to a Sessional Veto. Any Bill passed in the Commons and rejected by the Lords was to go straight to the Crown for signature if the Lords rejected it again in a subsequent Session.

Bright was not the only ex-Cabinet Minister who helped the Radicals at this stage. On November 16th Forster, presiding over a meeting of London Liberal Councils,² urged them to ask for a London Government Bill as well as a Franchise Bill. Meanwhile both Childers, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Harcourt, Home Secretary, seem to have been ready to do what they could to conciliate Dilke and Chamberlain inside the Cabinet and Fawcett, Mundella, Shaw-Lefevre, Holms, Courtney, and the rest of the "advanced," official and unofficial, outside. In view of Gladstone's age the prospect of a vacancy in the Prime Ministership and Leadership of the Commons was, of course, rarely out of politicians' minds. And Hartington was already being regarded as one, who had lost most of his chances of the succession through his inability to fall in with Radical ideas, and especially those of the masterful Chamberlain, controller of the National Liberal Federation.

There were those, indeed, who thought that, if Gladstone would but stay in office a year or two longer, Chamberlain himself might be the strongest candidate for his succession.³ Certainly he was now reaching the top of his platform powers, and his speeches at Bristol (November 26th), Wolverhampton (December 4th), and Newcastle (January 15, 1884) must have done much to prepare the country for the kind of Session that was in store. A quotation from each of these orations is worth giving to illustrate with what force and drive Chamberlain was deciding the

¹ Cf. Morley's *Recollections*, i, 198, for his sense of the importance of this step. Morley was President of the Conference.

² *Illustrated London News*, November 24, 1883.

³ *Fortnightly Review*, July 1883: Article, "The Future of the Radical Party."

political course of 1884. Here is a passage from the Bristol speech criticising the over-anxiety of some of the moderate Liberals to secure definite provision for "minority representation" in the coming Franchise Bill:¹

I really feel that this anxiety is altogether premature. What we have to deal with, the evil against which we are protesting, is the inordinate influence and power which minorities have obtained in our system; and really it is time that somebody should stand up and say a good word for the down-trodden majority. Minorities are everywhere. . . . A minority of the population, and only a minority, have any votes at all at the present time; of that minority another minority, not more than one-fifth, returns a majority of the House of Commons; and when this minority of a minority has succeeded in passing anything . . . then we allow another minority, an infinitesimal fraction of the people, without any representative authority whatsoever, whom we call a House of Lords, to exercise an absolute veto. . . . The same thing occurs throughout our local government; minorities turn the scale in elections of school boards, boards of guardians, and local boards. They exercise supreme authority in most of our great educational endowments. They govern our counties, and they deal despotically with all the details of licensing legislation. In these circumstances our object should be to reduce the power and influence of minorities, and to give a fair representation to majorities. . . ."

Here is another passage, this time from the Wolverhampton speech, vividly presenting the actual extent of the disfranchisement of the adult males of England and Ireland under the existing law:²

There are . . . in the United Kingdom $8\frac{1}{2}$ millions . . . of grown men, who directly or indirectly contribute to the taxes, and who are expected to obey the laws. Of this number just three millions are upon the register of voters. But if you deduct for dual and plural qualifications, for deaths, and for removals, I doubt very much whether there are at the outside more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions who would be able to vote at a general election. There are 6,000,000 of your fellow-countrymen—men of full age—who at the present moment are absolute pariahs in our Parliamentary system. . . . Out of seventeen men that you meet in the street five have votes, and twelve have no part in the government of the country. . . . There is nothing like this, gentlemen, in any civilised country in Europe. . . . There is nothing like it in the United States. There is nothing like it in (the) self-governing colonies. . . .

There are some people who are very indignant whenever anyone in authority admits that the Irish people have still some causes for

¹ From the "Authorised Edition" of Chamberlain's *Speeches* issued in October 1885, pp. 52-3.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 57-8.

dissatisfaction. But I will put the state of the case before you, and I will appeal to you whether, patient as you are, enduring as you are, you would tolerate—without murmuring—such a sham, such a fraud, such a transparent imposture as the present Irish Parliamentary system. In Great Britain . . . one person in ten of the population has a vote, and we think it too few. But in Ireland only one person in twenty-five is on the register. In England and Scotland, of the adult males three out of eight are electors; in Ireland it is only one in six. . . .

Lastly, passing over Chamberlain's biting platform treatment of Tory efforts to stir up Ulster against the rest of Ireland, and to make political capital at home from British troubles in Egypt and the Sudan, attention may be brought back once more, as Chamberlain always brought it back himself, to Parliamentary Reform. Dealing at Newcastle, in January 1884, with Tory objections to Irish¹ Franchise Extension and with Tory demands that even British Franchise Extension should be delayed until agreement had been reached on Redistribution, the great Radical orator said:²

I do not believe that if the Tories had to deal with this matter themselves they would propose to exclude Ireland from the rights which they would give to England and Scotland. They do not care so much about the exclusion of Ireland. What they want to do is to postpone our proposal with regard to England and Scotland, and it is for this reason they propose we should take redistribution along with a simple Franchise Bill in order that both may be endangered. It is for this that they magnify difficulties in Ireland, and that they represent the defeat of a native force by a savage chief in Egypt as if it were an English disaster as great as the Indian Mutiny. These are their tactics. In the presence of them let us be steadfast, and we shall frustrate them. Sir Richard Cross let the cat out of the bag when he said that if the Prime Minister did not pass the Franchise Bill it might go over to the Greek Kalends. We do not intend that it shall go over to the Greek Kalends. . . . I know that there are some who express alarm at the recent development of our Liberal organisations. They denounce it as the caucus; they describe it as a machine. I am not surprised that the Tories should dislike it. These great open popular representative associations are not at all in their line. . . . The "Primrose League" is more in their way, with its silly sentimental title. I confess I am surprised when I find these organisations objected to and criticised by many who profess themselves in sympathy

¹ The Tories claimed that to allow Irish Franchise Extension would be to give the vote to sections of the population, ignorant and debased beyond the average Englishman's conception. These Irish sections, too, would, if enfranchised, add vastly to Parnell's power to obstruct Parliament for, with their aid, he would command not 60 seats, but 80 or 90.

² *Speeches of Joseph Chamberlain*, pp. 73-4.

English Radicalism 1853-1886

with the democratic movement. Why, the democratic movement would lose all its force without organisation. The difficulty of Radicalism in times past has always been that there was no cohesion among the people. Napoleon III told Mr. Cobden in conversation that private interests were like a disciplined regiment, while the public good was defended by a disorganised mob. The force of democracy to be strong must be concentrated.¹ . . .

¹ The concluding part of this address was evidently aimed at Joseph Cowen, senior member for Newcastle, who though an out-and-out Radical had given much trouble by opposing "caucus politics."

THE STRUGGLE FOR PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, 1884

"If I saw the agricultural labourers of Great Britain in a great state of excitement over this (Franchise) question, if I saw them holding vast meetings, collecting together from all parts of England, neglecting their work, contributing from their scanty funds, marching on London, tearing down the railings in Hyde Park, engaging the police, and even the military, I should say to myself: these men have great grievances, which have not been represented in Parliament. . . ."

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL *at Edinburgh, December 19, 1883.*

"I compared his efforts in the cause of General Gordon with his efforts in the cause of Mr. Bradlaugh. If a hundredth part of those invaluable moral qualities bestowed upon the cause of a seditious blasphemer had been given to the support of a Christian hero, the success of Gordon's mission would have been assured. But the finest speech he ever delivered in the House of Commons was in support of the seditious blasphemer; and the very worst he ever delivered, by common consent, was in the cause of the Christian hero."

LORD R. CHURCHILL *in the Censure Debate opened during the Franchise Bill proceedings. ("Hansard," May 13, 1884.)*

"The Queen . . . feels bound to observe upon the language of *defiance* in the Speech of one of the Cabinet Ministers (Mr. Chamberlain)—one who she has long considered as most dangerous in the Cabinet, and one to whom she fears Mr. Gladstone is inclined to listen far more than to those who hold moderate opinions. This Speech . . . is most dangerous—tending to stir up class against class in a very reckless manner. . . . Hardly a day passes without some *violent* and contemptuous language towards the House of Lords being used by people *belonging* to the Administration. . . ."

THE QUEEN *protests to Mr. Gladstone, July 25, 1884.*

"Every now and again, at rare intervals, the whole country seems to be stirred by some deep and common impulse. The voice of the nation rises and swells until it drowns the feeble notes of faction, and pronounces in unmistakable terms a nation's will. Something of that sort occurred when there was a feeling of horror and indignation evoked by the outrages in Bulgaria. . . . And again the same thing happened when Mr. Plimsoll roused

the conscience of the nation to the iniquity of sacrificing brave men's lives to the supposed necessity of commercial enterprise. . . . The agitation in which we are engaged is rapidly assuming a similar character. A great wave of excitement has passed over the country. The torrent is still rising. Yesterday it was Scotland; to-day it is the Midland district; to-morrow it will be Wales; and everywhere it is not a party agitation—it is something like a real uprising of the people. . . . Up to the present time we have had at least five times as many meetings as our opponents have had, and our meetings have been ten times as numerous attended. . . . How long is this state of effervescence and agitation rapidly degenerating into irritation to continue? These great gatherings are only held at considerable inconvenience. They effect a great disturbance of ordinary business, and they involve much personal sacrifice. . . .”

MR. CHAMBERLAIN at *Hanley*, October 7, 1884.

ON February 28, 1884, Gladstone introduced the long-awaited Franchise Bill into the House of Commons. Calculated as it was to increase the electorate from three to five millions,¹ it seemed to justify all the Radical patience which had been exercised since 1880, and the more so since the Prime Minister was pledged to follow up Franchise Extension in 1884 with Radical Redistribution in 1885. The Government, indeed, had pledged itself to much varied “progress” besides, from elected County Governments and a London Municipality to additional Corrupt Practices legislation² and more Extension of Polling Hours,³ from Irish Sunday Closing and Welsh Intermediate

¹ *Hansard*, February 28th. Gladstone.

² The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act of 1883 had applied only to Parliamentary Elections. Its principles were now extended to Municipal Elections. How the new legislation operated may be illustrated from the Birmingham Liberal Association's carefully compiled “Abstract of Provisions affecting the Working of an Election,” which incidentally serves to show the perfection of electoral apparatus achieved in Birmingham under Chamberlain's direction. Here is the beginning of the calculations as to the permitted expenditure in the different Birmingham wards:

<i>Ward</i>	<i>No. of Burgesses</i>	<i>Max. Elec. Expenses</i>	<i>Clerks or Messengers</i>	<i>Committee Rooms</i>	<i>Personation Agents</i>
Rotten Park ..	4,825	£79 1 3	5	3	7
All Saints' ..	5,697	£89 19 3	6	3	9
Ladywood ..	4,978	£80 19 6	5	3	9

³ This was a “Labour” demand.

The Struggle for Parliamentary Reform 1884

Education to a Merchant Shipping Bill further to protect the crews and a Railway Commission Bill further to protect the travelling public. But it was, of course, recognised that the great Sessional struggle would turn on the Franchise Bill and that delay with some or even—in a critical case—all the other projects was inevitable.

It had been obvious for some time that direct Tory opposition to the principle of Franchise Extension would be most ill-advised.¹ That is why Tory strategists had already spent many valuable hours attacking the “blood guiltiness” of Ministers who permitted Egyptian armies and garrisons to be slain by the Mahdi in the Sudan.² That is why they were to spend many more, first in criticising General Gordon’s despatch to evacuate the remaining Egyptian garrisons, and then, when it gradually became obvious that Gordon was disregarding his instructions, in demanding that a force be sent to Khartum to effect his rescue. In this general atmosphere of recrimination on the Sudan and Egypt—not to mention the Transvaal,³ New Guinea, Central Asia,⁴ and Ireland—the Government’s position, it was felt, might be so seriously weakened as to bring about its fall or, at least, its inability to “coerce” the Lords in the matter of the Franchise.

The Second Reading debate on the Franchise Bill took place between March 24th and April 7th, and, during its course, the Tories of the Commons had the delicate task of opposing the Government without condemning the Bill “in principle.” The Tories claimed that they did not object to the Franchise proposals in themselves, but only to their production by a decrepit and

¹ Cf. Winston Churchill’s *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, i, 338–9, for what happened at Edinburgh on December 19, 1883. When Lord Randolph, already the most popular Conservative platform-speaker in the country, merely argued the inopportune-ness of Franchise Extension at the moment, his audience grew so restive as to induce his two principal platform supporters to declare there and then for the “assimilation of the county and borough franchise.”

² Cf. *Hansard*, February 12th, Lord R. Churchill: “‘Too late!’ is an awful cry. From time immemorial it has heralded and proclaimed the slaughter of routed armies, the flight of dethroned monarchs, the crash of falling Empires. Wherever human blood has been poured out in torrents, wherever human misery has been accumulated in mountains, wherever disasters have occurred which have shaken the world to its very centre, there straight and swift, up to heaven, or down to hell, has always gone the appalling cry, ‘Too late! Too late!’ The Opposition cannot but move a vote of censure upon a Government whose motto is ‘Too late.’ . . .”

³ Cf. *Ibid.* (Lords), March 17th, for debates on the new Transvaal Convention condemned by Conservatives as another “surrender to the Boers.”

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, March 10th, for discussion on the Russian occupation of Merv.

discredited Government as a means of retaining power. They claimed also that, just as there had been no real public demand for the Franchise Bill, so there would be no real public resentment if the Lords, braving the artificial indignation meetings already being prepared by the "Caucus," declined to enact Franchise Extension except in company with Redistribution. There seems, indeed, to have been some genuine Tory fear that if in 1884 the two million new voters of the Franchise Bill were admitted to the Registers unconditionally, Chamberlain and his wicked Radicals might prepare a tricky Redistribution Bill for 1885, capable of lowering Tory representation in the Commons to catastrophic depths. Chamberlain¹ and his brother Radicals, on the other hand, claimed that the enfranchisement of the two millions was only an act of tardy justice about which there could be no bargaining. To allow the Tories to thrust Redistribution into the Franchise discussion was, in the Radical view, to give them a dangerous opportunity of winning to their side the votes of members for "Liberal" boroughs scheduled for suppression or semi-suppression. And there were, in point of fact, sufficient of these votes definitely to turn the scale against the Government in certain circumstances.²

Opposition strategy with regard to the Franchise Bill can hardly be deemed to have succeeded and, certainly, the furious struggle raging inside the party between the friends of the official leader, Sir Stafford Northcote, and the partisans of Lord Randolph Churchill was not of a nature to attract into the fold even the most "moderate" of Whigs.³ On April 7th, therefore, the Franchise Bill was carried on Second Reading by 340 votes against 210. By May 20th Tory hesitation had so increased that a vital amendment for the exclusion of Ireland from the Bill was defeated by 332 against 137, despite strong contention that the enfranchisement of the Fenian occupants of mud cabins was not what the "British public" understood by Household Suffrage. On June 26th, finally, the Bill was ordered to be read a third time *nemine contradicente*.

¹ Chamberlain's own effective speech during the Second Reading debate is in *Hansard* under March 27th.

² The Tory strategists expected that either "disaster" in the Sudan or "outrage" in Ireland would favour their chance. Serious "outrage" in Ireland, for example, might encourage "moderate Liberals" to turn against the Government at the very time when the Irish party was resisting Ministers on coercion.

³ Cf. Winston Churchill's *Lord Randolph Churchill*, i, 302-31, for a pious son's account of his father's machinations.

The Struggle for Parliamentary Reform 1884

If the Franchise Bill proceedings in the Commons had thus deeply disappointed Conservatives,¹ those in the Lords did so scarcely less. Though on the Second Reading proceedings there the Conservative leaders did not move a direct rejection but only a delay until the Government's Redistribution Scheme was presented, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Whig Duke of Argyll both voiced disconcerting opposition to the Conservative leaders' course.² The Government was, of course, defeated, but "the country" was hardly likely to be impressed by the wickedness of its "Radical" Government when even the Lords only divided against it by 205 to 146.

Gladstone, in fact, virtually gave the Radicals the signal to start the greatest anti-Lords agitation since 1832 when on July 10th he took the Lords' action as a rejection of the Franchise Bill and announced that it would be withdrawn. With the active help of the London Trades Council a great opening demonstration was staged in the capital on July 21st. On that day an enormous procession, that took three hours to pass a given point, marched with banners flying and music playing through crowded London streets towards Hyde Park. The spirit alike of marchers and cheering spectators may best be judged from such favourite banner mottoes as: "We will have the Bill," "The Franchise for every working man," "The Government for the people," "Give us the vote," "We demand the vote," "The people's will—the Franchise Bill and the reform of the House of Lords," and "Shall the peers rob the people of their vote?" And, arrived in the Park, the 25,000 to 30,000 processionists, the tens of thousands who had awaited them there, and the further tens of thousands who followed them in, co-operated in a monster meeting round seven platforms which came to the following resolution:³

Resolved—That this vast assembly consisting of seven enormous meetings . . . emphatically protests against the rejection of the Repre-

¹ Churchill's astounding *volte-faces* were largely responsible. With great platform talents he had neither principle nor consistency. By May 20th he had completely changed his original attitude to the Bill and was deriding the Conservatives still opposing it.

² *Hansard*, July 7th and 8th.

³ *The Times*, July 22, 1884, for the whole proceedings. The paper's independent comment was: "Yesterday London witnessed a great and imposing spectacle. . . . It was a demonstration made by the people for the people, and it exhibited every sign of spontaneity and enthusiasm. . . . These men were no roughs . . . no idlers. . . ."

sensation of the People Bill by an irresponsible and unrepresentative House of Lords, notwithstanding its almost unanimous acceptance by the people, and the people's accredited representatives; and it approves Mr. Gladstone's action in advising Her Majesty to summon an autumn session of Parliament, and his determination to send up the Bill again to the Peers; and further expresses its opinion that the continued existence of an unchecked power of impeding and obstructing the popular will at present exercised by the House of Peers is not conducive either to the welfare of the people or the peace and prosperity of the country. . . .

Next day Lord Salisbury, opening a Conservative campaign of counter-demonstration, made it clear that he and his friends were still defiant.¹

"The House of Commons," he said, "was elected upon issues that have passed away; its life has been nearly spent; it is the most servile House of Commons—servile to the Minister, servile to the caucus—that the Palace of Westminster has ever seen; and we are denounced because we will not allow this House of Commons so discredited—discredited by every circumstance, discredited by every by-election that takes place—to settle upon an unsound, partisan, and inequitable basis the Constitution which we are appointed to protect.

"The Government set up all sorts of shams and counterfeits; they descend into the streets; they call for processions; they imagine that 30,000 radicals going to amuse themselves in London on a given day expresses the public opinion of the country. That is not the way in which a progressive, cultured, and civilised State determines the opinions of its citizens. . . . A party can speak by processions and demonstrations, but the nation can only speak at the polling-booth, and any attempt to substitute the counterfeit voice which is manufactured by the caucus, will assuredly not lead to a true ascertainment of the feelings of the people. . . . We, at all events, will not consent to be guided by public opinion of the streets."

Thus opened more than three months of agitation and counter-agitation which the *Annual Register*² for the year made an interesting attempt to summarise in numerical terms:

"Judging from party meetings," it said, "the balance of numbers has been enormously in favour of the Liberals, who claimed to have

¹ *The Times*, July 23rd, for the Conservative proceedings at Sheffield. Chamberlain answered the very next day at the Devonshire Club, London: "He says," he declared of Salisbury, "that he insists on an appeal to the country. . . . He wants to appeal to the 3,000,000 who have the vote against the 2,000,000 who have it not—to the twelve-pounders in the counties against their less fortunate fellow-citizens—to the farmers against the labourers, to the residents in the villas against the population who dwell in the suburbs. He wants 3,000,000 of the present voters to decide in what way and to what extent and under what conditions the new voters shall come into their constitutional privileges. . . ."

² *Annual Register*, 1884 (quoted by Jephson, *The Platform*, ii, 550).

The Struggle for Parliamentary Reform 1884

held 1,277 public gatherings in England, and 235 in Scotland (a total of 1,512), against 184 in the former, and 11 in the latter country (195), in support of the House of Lords. The attendance at these meetings varied considerably, for which one set of estimates gave 3,500,000 for the Liberals, and 300,000 only to the Conservatives. Another calculation raised the numbers of the latter to 671,000, and reduced those of the Liberals to less than 1,500,000."

Feeling against the Peers grew steadily as the agitation proceeded, and "End or mend the House of Lords" was soon the favourite cry at franchise processions and demonstrations. One competent contemporary observer considered that when Gladstone, having wound up the Session and completed his more pressing administrative business, at last went down to his constituency, he held the fate of the Lords in his hands. Speaking of the situation on August 30th when the Prime Minister addressed his Midlothian constituents, this observer wrote:¹

When the Prime Minister's speech was delivered, it absorbed the attention of the Empire. No more momentous speech has been delivered in recent times. A few words from the speaker, of one sort, would have fanned into a consuming flame the agitation against the House of Lords. . . . The future trembled on the utterances of the speaker. Just as in the great crisis of the Reform agitation of 1832, when Attwood had described the people of England as standing "like greyhounds on the slip," so now they were straining to be let go. But the signal was not dropped.

To read the accounts of the meetings then taking place is to be forced to admit that the temper of the "millions" was rising high. At every meeting Liberal speakers obtained their best effects when reciting the sorry legislative history of the Lords throughout the century. The "people" needed no special whipping-up against the Peers after hearing the story of their consistent opposition to bestowing full citizenship upon Dissenters, Catholics, and Jews, their inalterable enmity to Parliamentary Reform, Vote by Ballot and changes in the Land System, and their unending obstruction of all manner of "progress" from fair rents in Ireland to University and Marriage Law Reform throughout the United Kingdom. It is plain enough that if Gladstone had chosen, he could have brought much more into question than the Lords' action on the Franchise Bill.

But Gladstone had not the slightest desire to enlarge the dispute

¹ H. Jephson, *The Platform*, ii, 538.

if he could avoid it. Moreover, he had allowed himself to be badgered by a long stream of protesting messages from Queen Victoria into undertaking not to raise the problem of the future constitution of the Lords himself and into muzzling the entire Ministry similarly, especially Chamberlain and Dilke.¹ Dealing as he was with a Queen whose messages out-Salisburied Salisbury,² conscious that her sanction might at last have to be sought for some manner of ultimate proceeding against the Peers—in circumstances, too, threatening possible danger to the Monarchy itself if there was a refusal³—Gladstone used grave but very sober language on August 30th:

“What is the purpose with which I have come among you?”⁴ said the Prime Minister. “. . . It is to promote, by every legitimate means in my power, the speedy passing of the Franchise Bill. . . .

“The rejection of that Bill has already drawn in its train other questions of the gravest kind, and has suggested to the minds of a vast portion of the people the inquiry, Whether the time has come when it will be necessary to study the means of introducing an organic change into the constitution of the House of Lords? Now, gentlemen, into that question it is not my intention on this occasion to enter. The controversy now before us with regard to the Franchise Bill is sufficiently weighty, and the field sufficiently wide. Should the passing of that measure be delayed, I have no doubt that the field of the controversy will become

¹ Cf. *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, ii, 278-309. The Queen telegraphed on July 11th: “Sir C. Dilke has already begun to attack Peers. You told me in the winter that he and Mr. Chamberlain must be told to be prudent in their language. . . . If you wish for future conciliation, threats and abuse of the House of Lords must not proceed from members of the Government.” The Prime Minister answered on the same day: “He (Mr. Gladstone) stated yesterday to the Liberal majority, assembled at the Foreign Office, his own intention to avoid at the present time all discussion as to the character, recent history, composition, and future prospects of the House of Lords. Being very desirous to know whether he could reckon on the concurrence of Sir C. Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain in this view, he requested an interview with them last night and found that they were quite satisfied. . . . Mr. Gladstone considers that this undertaking covers the whole period between this date and the next submission of the Bill to the House of Lords.” Yet there followed on July 25th an almost hysterical protest from the Queen in regard to speeches just made by Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Herbert Gladstone; further protests on August 6th, 8th, and 10th, in regard to a Birmingham speech of Mr. Chamberlain’s; protests on October 20th against Trevelyan’s admission into the Cabinet, “as she knew him to be formerly a very advanced Radical . . .” and more protests on October 22nd and 27th.

² Cf. *Ibid.*, ii, 286 (July 15th): “She is sorry that she cannot agree with him in his opinion of the House of Lords which has rendered such important services to the nation and which at this moment is believed to represent the true feeling of the country . . . an independent body of men acting solely for the good of the country and free from the terror which forces so many Commoners to vote against their consciences. . . .” ³ Cf. *Ibid.*, ii, 287, 298.

⁴ Quoted from Jephson’s *The Platform*, ii, 538-40.

The Struggle for Parliamentary Reform 1884

wider still. But my duty as a Minister of the Crown . . . is not to look into the far future while the work of the day demands every energy . . . that we possess. . . . Others are more free to enter into what may or may not happen in the ulterior stages of this great conflict. But for my part I seek to avoid them . . . unless and until the moment comes when I can no longer deny their necessity.

"There is another point . . . which is the allegation that the House of Lords is not willing to give way to the House of Commons, but is willing to give way to the people . . . the doctrine that it is the function of the House of Lords to point out the time of dissolution, and to determine when the country is to be referred to, is a doctrine which has no place whatever in our history or our Constitution. To tamper with that doctrine, to give it the smallest countenance . . . would, in my opinion, be treason to British liberty; and I tell you fairly, I would far rather abandon my share in the Franchise Bill, and that which would go with it, my share in political life, than for one moment cease to raise the loudest protest in my power against the introduction of this, the greatest innovation which either in a reformed Parliament or in an unreformed Parliament, was ever heard of, by a majority of the House of Lords. . . ."

This was a statesmanlike speech in the best sense, and astute, too, in choosing the strongest possible ground against the Peers' demand for a General Election to prove whether the Commons majority really represented the nation. But the reception of the speech by the audience was also regarded as having its importance, and on this *The Times* reporter gave that journal's readers the following significant comment:¹

It was noteworthy that Mr. Gladstone's declaration of his personal adherence to the principle of an hereditary House was received in silence, broken only by a few faint murmurs of dissent. When, however, he proceeded to warn the peers that they were placing the hereditary principle in jeopardy by provoking a contest with the representative House and with the people, he was cheered to the echo. Tremendous cheering also followed his declaration that the doctrine that the House of Lords had a right to fix the time for the dissolution of Parliament was a doctrine that had no place in our history or our Constitution. . . ."

Meanwhile Lord Randolph Churchill was, already with characteristic effrontery, planning to undo much of the effect upon "public opinion" of the anti-Lords demonstrations by arranging a campaign of counter-demonstration in the Midlands. Ministers had resolved on a special Autumn Session of Parliament, virtually devoted to the Franchise Bill, and by planning his campaign for the week preceding the opening of this critical session, Lord

¹ *The Times*, September 1, 1884.

Randolph sought to obtain for his efforts the maximum of effect. The counter-demonstrations were to begin in Birmingham, the very capital of Radicalism, and, in order to make sure of success, there were to be provided at Aston Park, the scene of the opening Conservative rally, not merely five platforms of leading Conservative speakers including Sir Stafford Northcote and Lord Randolph but many attractions besides.¹ There were to be brass bands in plenty, fireworks and illuminations and, most important of all perhaps, cheap excursion tickets from all the surrounding countryside and 120,000 free admission tickets.

There appears to have been deep anger throughout Radical Birmingham at what was apparently to be a flagrant attempt to misrepresent to the country what the true political sentiments of its inhabitants really were. Accordingly, while admission tickets were still, in the first flush of Conservative confidence, being issued without much inquiry, Trade Union and Radical Club Secretaries seem to have obtained whole blocks which were thereupon distributed among those of their members who were anxious to go to Aston Park on October 13th not to cheer and applaud but to dissent and protest. Then as Conservative organisers grew more cautious and even became nervous enough to hire roughs as "chuckers-out," forged admission tickets to Aston Park began to circulate among their opponents. Finally, on October 13th, Aston Park was dominated not by Conservatives but by Radicals who had either obtained admission at the gates with tickets, genuine or forged, or else had formed part of the three great Radical processions of protest whose wilder members had battered down part of Aston Park Wall to get into the meeting. Violent affrays, of course, followed inside the park and, though all the Conservative plans were wrecked, it is doubtful whether on balance the Birmingham Ultra-Radicals did not do themselves more harm than good by their activities that day. Certainly Conservative attempts to fasten responsibility on Chamberlain, vain though they proved, must temporarily have weakened his position in the Cabinet, and Schnadhorst, too, as the organiser of the hated Caucus, suffered unmerciful Conservative abuse.²

¹ Cf. Churchill's *Lord Randolph Churchill*, i, 361-3. Lavish finance was available from the National Union of Conservative Associations under whose auspices the demonstrations were being planned and from the more austere and more powerful Central Conservative Organisation.

² The Conservatives made the "Aston Park Riots" the leading topic in the Debate on the Address with which the Session opened. Had Chamberlain

The Struggle for Parliamentary Reform 1884

Despite the concentration of Tory attack upon him to a degree which might have driven a less intrepid and less securely placed politician out of public life, Chamberlain closed the anti-Lords demonstrations on a defiant Radical note. Speaking at Denbigh on October 20th, he ended a speech, wherein he had derided the Conservatives' inability to deceive the country for all their "ticket meetings," "picnic parties," and "fireworks," with a bitter summary of the nineteenth-century record of the House of Lords. His concluding words were especially bellicose:¹

"No, gentlemen," he said, "I have no spite against the House of Lords; but as a Dissenter I have an account to settle with them. . . . I boast a descent of which I am as proud as any baron may be of the title which he owes to the smile of a king or to the favour of a king's mistress, for I can claim descent from one of the 2,000 ejected Ministers, who, in the time of the Stuarts, left home and work and profit rather than accept the State-made creed which it was sought to force upon them, and for that reason, if for no other, I share your hopes and your aspirations (Welsh Disestablishment) and I resent the insults, the injuries and the injustice from which you have suffered so long at the hands of a privileged assembly. But the cup is nearly full. The career of high-handed wrong is coming to an end. The House of Lords have alienated Ireland, they have oppressed the Dissenters, and they now oppose the enfranchisement of the people. We have been too long a peer-ridden nation, and I hope you will say to them that if they will not bow to the mandate of the people they shall lose for ever the authority they have so long abused."

It needed not the prolonged and enthusiastic cheering with which these and similar sentiments had been greeted throughout the three months of agitation to make it plain to the Conservative leaders that they would not be allowed to force an election on the old Registers. There had at one time been high hopes of

been incautious enough to take the slightest share in the Ultra-Radical counsels preceding the riots the Government would have fallen and the Franchise Bill been lost. As it was, after the anti-Chamberlain amendment on the Address had been repelled in a Division of 178-214, the attempt to incriminate Chamberlain was continued in the Law Courts during proceedings against the "rioters" and the man who ordered the forged tickets. Thus Chamberlain himself was forced into the witness-box of the Birmingham Police Court on November 26th, and his position was still uncomfortable at the subsequent Assizes (February 28th and March 2, 1885).

¹ *Speeches of the Rt. Hon. Joseph Chamberlain*, p. 97. It was apparently of this speech that the Queen wrote to Mr. Gladstone: "The Queen must again call Mr. Gladstone's attention to Mr. Chamberlain's speeches. He *approves* of the *disgraceful* riot at Birmingham!! If a Cabinet Minister makes use of such language and sets the Prime Minister's Injunctions at defiance—he ought *not* to remain in the Cabinet. His language if *not* disavowed, justifies the *worst apprehensions* of the Opposition."

such an election, and if the Conservative leaders had really been allowed to appeal exclusively to the "privileged three million," strenuous use of Majuba, Phoenix Park, and the Sudan might well have given them a majority without their needing to commit themselves to anything but the haziest generalities on Suffrage Extension and Redistribution. If victory had come also, it would not merely have left Suffrage Extension and Redistribution for the Tories to "manage" or to neglect at their good pleasure. It would also have spelt the doom of the "Radical Programme," so carefully prepared by the "Caucus" to appeal to the majority of the Franchise Bill's proposed five millions of electors, and a debit rather than an asset if the three millions on the old registers were alone to have the choice of the next Parliament. Now, though able to begin the Autumn Session with a grand attempt to discredit Chamberlain and with him the "Radical Programme,"¹ the Tories yet found it impossible to stay the rapid repassage of the Franchise Bill through the Commons² and its second arrival in the Lords.

There followed a few days of dangerous crisis between November 13th and November 17th, but on the latter date the Conservative leaders virtually agreed to give the Franchise Bill an undisputed passage³ to the Statute Book in return for a Government assurance that they would be taken into consultation on the Redistribution Scheme. Nearly a fortnight of secret meetings between the party leaders followed,⁴ and Radical M.P.s unconnected with the Government had some reason to fear lest Ministers, anxious for success in their novel negotiations with the Tory leaders, should forget the "End or Mend the Lords" cry which

¹ Cf. *Hansard*, October 24th and October 27th, for preliminary "snarling" preceding the Aston Riots debate of October 30th. On the Division of 214 against 178 the *Annual Register* observed: "The majority exonerating Mr. Chamberlain from any blameworthy act was far smaller than a member of the Cabinet commanding the confidence and sympathy of his supporters had a right to expect."

² On November 6th Gladstone moved the Second Reading; on November 7th a Conservative amendment was defeated by 372-232 and the Bill was read a Second Time; on November 10th the Bill passed through Committee and on November 11th it received a Third Reading unopposed.

³ On November 18th the Franchise Bill was allowed its Second Reading in the Lords without a Division. Lady Gwendolen Cecil's *Life of Salisbury*, iii, 121, shows why. "A great many indications," wrote Salisbury to a colleague, "combined to prove that the ice was cracking all round us, and that we should have led the party to great disaster if we had declined to negotiate."

⁴ For previous secret meetings see Andrew Lang's *Sir Stafford Northcote*, ii, 203-6.

The Struggle for Parliamentary Reform 1884

had played so essential a part in forcing the Peers to accept Parliamentary Reform. On November 21st a Radical Motion in the name of Labouchere was debated which aptly summarised the Radicals' case. It was worded as follows:¹

That in view of the fact that the Conservative party is able, and has for many years been able, through its permanent majority in the House of Lords, to alter, defeat, or delay legislation, although that legislation has been recommended by the responsible advisers of the Crown, and approved by the nation through its elected representatives, it is desirable to make such alterations in the relations of the two Houses of Parliament as will effect a remedy to this state of things.

This Motion could not of course be accepted by a Government engaged in secret consultations with the Tory leaders, and even Chamberlain and Dilke had in the interests of Ministerial solidarity to leave the House before the Division came on. But though the Radical motion was defeated by 147 votes against 73, there were plenty of confident commentators who prophesied a very different issue in the next and reformed House of Commons.

By November 27th Gladstone was able to announce to the Queen that he had reached agreement with the Opposition leaders on the principles of the proposed Redistribution of Seats Bill.² This meant that the Franchise Bill could now be taken unopposed through its last stage in the Lords, and that both Houses could then be adjourned for a fairly long Recess. Such a Recess, indeed, was almost necessary. Not only had the Redistribution plan to be turned into a Bill, demanding peculiar care at every stage of the drafting, but preparation had to be made for dealing with a heavy budget of non-political Bills. Thanks to continuous political "crises" since 1880, every department had its accumulation of legislative arrears which it was anxious at least to diminish during the first half of 1885 and before all else was swallowed up in preparations for the inevitable General Election.

Not till February 19, 1885, therefore, was Parliament re-assembled to wrestle with the varied legislative projects prepared for it from Redistribution downwards. And during the intervening Recess, Chamberlain had begun anew his chosen task of forcing the pace of internal change. On January 5th he had made that slashing attack on landlordism whose best-known phrase, "What ransom

¹ *Hansard*, November 21st.

² *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, ii, 318-19.

will property pay?" led infuriated Conservatives to denounce him as the Jack Cade of the nineteenth century.¹ Nothing daunted, however, the Radical leader went on to make another startling speech at Ipswich on January 11th.²

"The agricultural labourer," he said in one passage, "is the most pathetic figure in our whole social system. He is condemned by apparently inexorable conditions to a life of unrelenting and hopeless toil, with the prospect of the poorhouse as its only or probable termination. For generations he has been oppressed, ignored, defrauded, and now he will have to be reckoned with. The inarticulate voice will find expression, and we shall learn from his own lips, or from those of his representatives, what are his wants, and how he thinks to supply them. . . . The squire and the farmer, and sometimes the parson, have all been lying on the agricultural labourer; but . . . they will have to find some new position."

Nor were Mr. Chamberlain's views on the immediate "practical politics" facing the country any less alarming. The Abolition of School Pence was required because

we force a parent to give up the labour of his child at a time, perhaps, when it is almost necessary to the subsistence of his family. We ought not to go further and impose upon him a tax, a tax proportioned not according to the ability of the parent to pay but according to his necessities and wants. I cannot doubt that the example in this respect which has been set in the United States, in France, and almost throughout the Continent will be imitated in our own country also.

As if this did not threaten to "burden property" sufficiently by requiring from it still "heavier" rates for the detested School Boards, Mr. Chamberlain opened up further and more distasteful possibilities. There was no reason, urged Mr. Chamberlain, why elected councils in the rural districts should not provide the country populations with some of the amenities already bestowed on the urban poor by their municipal corporations—baths and washhouses, free libraries and museums, and even hospitals too. And if town corporations were to be enabled to undertake, in addition to all this, "the provision of healthy decent dwellings at fair rents," there was every reason for giving the projected rural authorities parallel powers to take over land at a fair valuation,³ not so much for housing as for small-holdings.

¹ *Chamberlain's Speeches*, pp. 98-105, for the speech.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 106-15.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 110, for a definition which caused more vituperation among landlords. He defined "fair value" as "the price which a willing purchaser

The Struggle for Parliamentary Reform 1884

Worse still, however, from the Conservative standpoint was the "Communist" incitement of the following passage, worthy of Henry George himself:¹

Land used to be held in common. Every man who was born into a community had his apportioned share in the great natural inheritance of the race, and if he was willing to work his livelihood was assured. Now all that has changed. The birthright of the English people has been bartered away for a mess of pottage, and it has become the possession of private owners of property. . . . It is said these views lead straight to communism, and that communism is a very terrible thing. Let us understand each other. I for one have never thought it possible or expedient to bring everything down to one dead level. I have never supposed you could equalise the capacities and conditions of men. The idler, the drunkard, the criminal, and the fool must bear the brunt of their defects. The strong man and the able man will always be first in the race. But what I say is that the community as a whole, co-operating for the benefit of all, may do something to add to the sum of human happiness, may do something to make the life of all its citizens, and above all, the poorest of them, somewhat better, somewhat nobler, somewhat happier.

And so the speaker went on to demand, over and above the things already set out, a staggering variety of others. Local authorities, for example, were to have their rating jurisdiction extended so as to be able to draw contributions from landlords' ground rents, and from the urban building sites landlords kept vacant while waiting for a speculative rise. The central government, it was suggested, might also increase its resources, or at least obtain its existing revenues more justly, by graduating the income-tax so that unearned income paid at a higher rate than earned, and bigger incomes at a higher rate than smaller. Nor was this all. The demand of distressed Scottish crofters for the "Three F's" that had been conceded in Ireland despite the hottest landlord opposition—Fair Rents, Fixity of Tenure, and Free Sale of Tenant Right—gave Mr. Chamberlain the opportunity of declaring for the "Three F's" all over the United Kingdom.

It was, however, the Birmingham speech of January 29th which seems to have aroused not merely Queen Victoria, but even Mr.

would pay to a willing seller in the open market." Chamberlain had already proved in a famous article on "Labourers' and Artisans' Dwellings" (*Fortnightly Review*, December 1883) how gross over-valuation of slum property had been possible even under Acts drafted by Conservatives "to guard against any excessive valuation of the property dealt with."

¹ *Chamberlain's Speeches*, pp. 108-9.

Gladstone, to special uneasiness.¹ In this speech the Radical leader had gone farther than hailing with pleasure the increase in the working-class membership of the House of Commons expected under the new Franchise Bill. After advocating additional measures to make fair working-class representation a reality, and especially payment of members and the abolition of the plural voting of the well-to-do, Mr. Chamberlain had proceeded to bring still more startling issues into the sphere of "practical politics." Thus on the ground that the existing system of taxation actually mulcted the incomes of the poor at a higher rate than the incomes of the rich, Mr. Chamberlain had proposed redress by offering the poor the "free breakfast table . . . and to enable you, perhaps, in addition to double and treble the currants and the raisins that you put in your Christmas pudding."² Then there were the "Socialistic" passages without which, complained the Tories, no speech by the President of the Board of Trade was now complete.

"Is it the case," Mr. Chamberlain had declaimed,³ "that any man who is willing to work can obtain employment at a fair remuneration; that he can provide for himself and his family, and lay something by for a rainy day? What are the real facts? During the last twenty years there has been a most extraordinary advance in the prosperity of this country; wealth has increased, manufactures have developed, invention has prospered, and our exports and imports have doubled and trebled. It has been calculated that the annual income of the country has increased in this time by 600 millions per annum. Well, the working classes have had some share in this prosperity. They have become more thrifty, more temperate, they are better educated, and they are, therefore, perhaps, more comfortable. But their advance has not been . . . in proportion to the general average. During the whole of this time there have been constantly in receipt of parish relief nearly one million of persons; and probably at the very least one million more have been on the verge of pauperism. During the same time 800,000 people have left the land. They have been forced to emigrate or driven into the towns."

For a Front Bench politician this was to show astonishing clarity and vision in handling the national statistics, and serves,

¹ *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, ii, 326. Having received a complaint from the Queen in regard to the speeches of January 5th and 11th, the Prime Minister wrote after this speech: "I have made a communication to him to the effect that after what has been said on the recent occasion there had better be some explanations among us when we meet. . . ."

² The money for the remission of the tea, sugar, etc., duties it was proposed to raise mainly by increasing the rate at which income-tax was collected from greater incomes.

³ *Chamberlain's Speeches*, p. 119 sqq.

The Struggle for Parliamentary Reform 1884

in fact, to explain why everything that Chamberlain touched was felt to have become "practical politics" immediately. All the more alarming therefore was his direct attack upon the Land System. He had repeatedly and with great bitterness denounced the landlord-promoted campaign for the restoration of Protection under the even more specious style of Reciprocity.¹ To Chamberlain it seemed the height of injustice to tax the food of the poor in order to prop up afresh an agricultural system only failing, in his view, to meet the competition of distant America, Canada, and Australia because of the landlord and Church burden it was compelled to carry and the economic inadaptability of the feudal estate. There was another and a juster way of arresting England's agricultural decline:

"The present system," said Mr. Chamberlain, ". . . has broken down. Farmers have no capital; landlords declare they are penniless. Then the land must pass into other hands, and we must consider . . . preparing the way for a return to the old conditions, when English agriculture was prosperous and the Poor Law was unknown. The present system was devised with the object of creating and increasing large estates. Silently and for generations the process of absorption of small properties has gone on, and all the time there has been nothing working in the opposite direction. There has been no force tending to dispersion and subdivision. I say that these forces we are bound to supply. . . .

"I want to multiply small owners and tenants. All this clamour about confiscation and blackmail and plunder is so much dust raised by men who are interested in maintaining the present system. . . . Let them keep their invective for some better occasion. . . . If it be blackmail to propose that the rich shall pay taxation in equal proportion to the poor, what word is strong enough to describe the present system, under which the poor pay more than the rich? If it be confiscation to suggest that land may be acquired at a fair value for public purposes, what language will fitly describe the operations of those who have wrongfully appropriated the common land, and have extended their boundaries at the expense of their poorer neighbours too weak and too ignorant to resist them? If it be plunder to require the restitution of this ill-gotten property, I should like to know what we are to say of those who perpetrated the original act of appropriation. The fact is, there are some people who have no con-

¹ The old Tory had believed in "Protection of the National Industries" pure and simple. The new Tory Protectionist showed greater guile. He normally opened by agreeing that there was much to be said for complete International Free Trade and even for Cobden's attempt to hasten its advent by inducing England to take the lead. But Cobden's prophecies, he went on to urge, that the rest of the world would follow had proved erroneous and now England should declare that Free Trade would only be accorded to states granting Reciprocity.

ception of any property at all except the property of private owners like themselves; and the public purse, the public right, the public land, and public endowments are so many abstractions unworthy of care or of protection. . . .”

No British Cabinet Minister had ever spoken in these tones before.¹

¹ The effect of Mr. Chamberlain's propaganda is more easily understood if there is some knowledge of the appalling “agricultural depression” forced on in Britain during the latter '70's by the flood of cheap North American corn from new-ploughed prairie lands, free of rent and tithe, and aggravated during the '80's by the further flood of cheap chilled and frozen meat from North America and Australasia. If landlords had not offered rent rebates and other concessions widely, sensational political developments—almost rivalling those in Ireland—might have been possible in England and Scotland. But agricultural rents, if still an important part of landlord-income, were becoming yearly less so as compared, say, with urban ground-rents, mineral royalties, and the dividend yields from the invested surpluses of the golden years of the past. Indeed, the survival and later resurgence of “aristocratic power” at a time when agricultural rent-rolls were falling still lower than during the first shocks of “agricultural depression” is incomprehensible unless these income-factors are kept in mind.

It should, perhaps, be remarked that Chamberlain was the more formidable from the fact that less authoritatively voiced theories than his were being helped at this stage by the advent of a new period of acute “industrial depression”—theories directed not merely against landlords but against capitalists and Stock Exchange manipulators also. Though the opening years of the Gladstone Government had seen a certain industrial improvement from the black years at the close of the Beaconsfield régime, the improvement had never been remarkable, and by 1884 industrial England was again in full depression. Here is Hyndman, the Socialist, explaining in 1892 the state of things that had given Socialists their following:

“From 1883 to 1888 was a time of low prices and stagnation of trade, it was a long, slow, grinding crisis in Great Britain, which was felt in every trade, and was reflected in the depression of every industry. There seemed to be a permanent glut and over-production. Furnaces were blown out in every iron district; collieries were shut down . . . ships were laid up. . . . It was, in fact, a crisis of the most serious kind, none the less dreadful because at the very same time there seemed to be no equivalent shrinkage in returns to income tax, and the ordinary trade of the country was proclaimed by experts to be ‘sound.’ The workers suffered for the blunders made by the ‘captains of industry’ and the ‘organisers of labour.’” (From Hyndman's *Commercial Crisis of the Nineteenth Century*.)

By the side of Hyndman, Chamberlain could be claimed almost as a “moderate.”

APPROACH OF THE GENERAL ELECTION OF 1885

"We have been looking to the extension of the franchise in order to bring into prominence questions which have been too long neglected. The great problem of our civilisation is unsolved. We have to account for and to grapple with a mass of misery and destitution in our midst, co-existent . . . with . . . abundant wealth and teeming prosperity. It is a problem which some men would put aside by reference to the eternal laws of supply and demand, to the necessity of freedom of contract, and to the sanctity of every private right of property. But, gentlemen, these phrases are the convenient cant of selfish wealth. They are no answers to our question. I quite understand the reason for timidity in dealing with this matter so long as government was merely the expression of the will and prejudice of a limited few. Under such circumstances there might be good reason for not intrusting it with larger powers, even for the relief of this misery and destitution. But now that we have a government of the people by the people, we will go on and make it the government for the people. . . . I shall be told to-morrow that this is Socialism. I have learnt not to be afraid of words that are flung in my face instead of argument. Of course it is Socialism. The Poor Law is Socialism; the Education Act is Socialism; the greater part of municipal work is Socialism; and every kindly act of legislation by which the community has sought to discharge its responsibilities and its obligations to the poor is Socialism; but it is none the worse for that. Our object is the elevation of the poor. . . ."

MR. CHAMBERLAIN *at Warrington on the Radical Programme,
September 8th.*

"Few are the points of the Gladstonian address which is one of the most politic ever issued. Dealing first with 'the Past,' the pamphlet . . . broadly treats the foreign complications which the late Government had to face in the East, in Afghanistan, in India, in South Africa and Egypt as legacies left by the preceding Administration of Lord Beaconsfield; claims that each of these unwelcome legacies of tribulation was fairly and justly executed; but . . . has the candour to admit that 'we' did commit 'errors, and serious errors, too, with cost of treasure and precious lives in the Soudan.' Then for 'the Future!' In the first place Mr. Gladstone indulges in 'an earnest aspiration for our entire withdrawal from Egyptian territory at the earliest moment

which honour will permit.' At the threshold of domestic affairs Mr. Gladstone places 'Reform of Parliamentary Procedure.' . . . Reform of Local Government is placed next . . . and 'Land Law Reform' comes next. . . . Then classified among the 'Rearguard' of Liberal Measures, come 'Reform of the House of Lords,' 'Dim and Distant' Disestablishment, Free Education (the taxation difficulties of which are enumerated) and the engrossing question of the good government of Ireland. In Ireland, Mr. Gladstone would be willing to cap the reforms already granted by an equitable system of local self-government."

The "Illustrated London News," September 26, 1885.

DESPITE Chamberlain's bold attempts of January 1885 to capture the national attention for the "Radical Programme," events in the Sudan were destined to rob him of complete success. Early in February 1885 the news reached England that General Gordon had perished when Khartoum fell into the hands of the Mahdi on January 26th. Though Gordon's fate was partly ascribable to his own disregard of instructions, and partly to the miscalculations of the relieving force which his obstinacy had finally forced the Government to send out, the public could not in the circumstances be given the full facts. It became fatally easy, therefore, to charge Ministers with having abandoned an ideal "Christian hero" to a cruel fate. Indeed, when Parliament reassembled on February 19th the interest of the politicians was centred not so much on Redistribution or the "Radical Programme" as on whether the Government could survive the inevitable Conservative Vote of Censure on the one hand and the Radical hostility on the other to that policy of "smash the Mahdi" to which the Cabinet temporarily committed itself under newspaper pressure. The Vote of Censure was beaten off, however, by 302 votes against 288.¹ And thanks to John Morley, the Radical objections to the Government's "smash the Mahdi" policy were so presented in Parliament that they offered the Tories not the extra votes that might have turned out the Government, but only the sorry satisfaction of supporting the Ministers' newly announced "vigour" against the Radical objectors.

¹ *Hansard*, February 27th. A Vote of Censure was carried in the Lords by 189 against 68.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

That Morley in the full flood of the Gordon hysteria of February 1885 could divide against both Front Benches combined at 112 against 455¹ shows, of course, that there were the strongest Radical objections to the policy of "smash the Mahdi."² The constant Tory complaint against the Government was that they seemed to have no allies or even friends in Europe—and yet the occupation of Egypt, now to be extended under Tory pressure, had certainly contributed vastly to this result. It had aroused the strongest objections from France and Russia and had given Germany, Austria, and even Turkey all manner of opportunity of levying undesirable "blackmail" as part of their price for making no difficulties about the British position in Egypt. What was worse was this—all the dangerous diplomatic storms, raging for the past three years, had been braved for an occupation avowedly temporary, and to be relinquished as soon as an Egyptian Government could be found strong enough to stand on its own feet once again as before the Arabi "revolt." To encourage the puppet Khedive to plunge once more into the blood and sand of the Sudan, to sink more British millions into assisting the work, when interest on the existing Egyptian debt already took an Army of Occupation to collect³ was, held the Radicals, to commit Britain to an unending occupation almost certain to result, sooner or later, in a great European war.

The Tory leaders, in fact, for all their loud and long lamentations over General Gordon, were fundamentally almost as doubtful as the Gladstone Cabinet itself whether the Radical arguments against large-scale operations in the Sudan were not valid.⁴ When

¹ *Hansard*, February 27th.

² Cf. *Life of Labouchere*, pp. 197–8, for the attempt of the "extreme Radicals" to prepare the way for Gladstone's recognition of the Mahdi as ruler of the Sudan.

³ Cf. *Hansard*, March 26, 1885, for Labouchere's summary of Radical objections to the occupation: "We insist on putting up the Khedive and maintaining him in power against his subjects. . . . We always insist in our treatment of Egyptian finance that the payment of interest on the debt should come first, and the expenses of administration second. The result of this policy is over-taxation, the postponement of reform and a deficit."

⁴ And, be it added, rather shrank from the prospect of succeeding to power at this stage. Cf. Lady Gwendolen Cecil's *Life of Salisbury*, iii, 129–30, for a letter of March 3rd. "Matters are gloomy," wrote Salisbury to a colleague. "I never knew them gloomier. We have differences amounting to very serious tension with France, Russia, and Germany, which carries Austria. Add to that Egypt, Ireland, a crushing Budget in prospect, and trade which will not revive. I cannot be thankful enough to those fourteen gentlemen who stood between us and such an inheritance as that. But can the Government go on?"

the Gordon hysteria therefore showed signs of abating under the Cabinet-administered soporifics of sending out the Guards and worrying the Mahdi from Suakim on the Sudanese Red Sea coast, the Redistribution debates could be taken on to their decisive phase in a somewhat more normal atmosphere. During their secret conferences of November 1884 the Opposition and Government leaders might have agreed on the Redistribution principles now embodied in the Government Bill. But after the Bill entered the Committee stage on March 6, 1885, repeated challenges to the proposed Redistribution details were to be made both by Radicals and disgruntled Tories. If many Tories held that Salisbury and Northcote had surrendered altogether too much to the wily Gladstone, the principal Radical complaint concerned a number of cases in which the Prime Minister was considered to have given in too readily to anti-democratic Tory demands. In the original Government Redistribution scheme, outlined before the Tories had been called into consultation, the abolition of the University seats had at least been in question. But if some consideration had originally been given to Radical dislike of the system which allowed Oxford, Cambridge, and Dublin Universities to weight the Commons with six Ultra-Tories, and the Scottish Universities and that of London with one Tory more and two Whigs, it had certainly not survived the secret Redistribution conferences with the Tory leaders.¹ On March 10th, therefore, the decision to retain University representation was challenged by the Radicals not in the Government.² The Division of 79 against 260 which resulted shows how impossible they found it to shake the fiat of Gladstone and Sir Stafford Northcote combined.

If the Cabinet had here to come to the rescue of a Conservative demand accepted at the Redistribution Conferences,

¹ Lady G. Cecil's *Life of Salisbury*, iii, 123-4, gives an account which it is very difficult to confirm. According to her the Redistribution Conference almost broke down on the University seats. "Ministers insisted upon their abolition; Lord Salisbury, with even greater rigidity, upon their retention. There came a day when a deadlock was reached, and he reported to his wife that he feared the Conference must break up . . . she drove down to Downing Street . . . and asked to see the Prime Minister. She appealed to him by all the old Church and Oxford memories . . . and also staked her knowledge of her husband's character on the assurance that it was a point upon which he would never yield. Mr. Gladstone gave way . . . in all probability there was no antagonism of his own to overcome, only deference to his followers' prejudices. . . ."

² It was Professor Bryce who led on this occasion.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

they were soon calling for reciprocal services from the Conservative leaders. A large number of Tory M.P.s objected violently to the alleged Radicalism of the Redistribution terms which their leaders had accepted. To have agreed to let the London area have 37 seats more, Liverpool 6 more, Glasgow 4 more, Birmingham 4 more, Manchester 3 more, Sheffield 3 more, and Leeds 2 more—to have consented to increase Yorkshire's representation by 16, Lancashire's by 15, Middlesex's by 5, Cork's by 5, Durham's by 4, and Lanarkshire's by 4 certainly appeared, on a superficial view, vastly to have improved Radicalism's prospects of winning power. And this seemed to be more than ever the case when it was remembered that virtually all the new seats were obtained by the complete disfranchisement of old boroughs with less than 15,000 inhabitants and the semi-disfranchisement of old two-member boroughs with between 15,000 and 50,000.

Nor were these the only objections of the Tory rank and file¹ to terms which their leaders would certainly never have accepted in February 1885, during the Gordon clamour, as they had accepted them in November 1884, when the gale was blowing from another quarter and threatening not the Government but the House of Lords. The Irish Tories, for example, complained unceasingly of the catastrophic electoral effects that would follow in Ireland from Franchise Bill and Redistribution combined.² Certainly the enfranchisement of hundreds of thousands of "completely illiterate" holders of "tumble-down one-room cabins" as "householders" was going to add so vastly to the Parnellites' power of doing "mischief" in Ireland that, if the Tory leaders had not had their hands tied in advance, some modification of Redistribution might well have been enforceable.

The Conservative leaders had, of course, accepted the Irish Redistribution terms for the same reason that the Government had proposed them—the desire not to give Parnell a new grievance to exploit against the Union. But this defence of the Tory leaders

¹ Cf. S. H. Jeyes's *Life of Salisbury*, iv, 103-4, for a frank treatment of the Redistribution mutinies. Of a Carlton Club meeting of March 16th, Jeyes writes: "The Ulster Conservatives were particularly strong in denouncing a Bill which, they argued—and the result has verified their fears—would strike an almost fatal blow against the Party prospects in Ireland. Some of the malcontents seem to have expected that though their party was in a minority, they ought to have got as favourable a settlement as a majority. . . ."

² Cf. *Life of Col. Saunderson, M.P.*, pp. 77-81. Saunderson, about to become a notoriously fire-eating Orange M.P., had actually called himself an "Irish Liberal" in the Parliament of 1865-8.

was hardly available on other disputable parts of the Redistribution scheme where, for what they considered excellent strategic reasons, they had actually insisted on much more Radical departures from electoral precedent than Mr. Gladstone himself had originally meditated.¹ Thus all the counties were now to be divided into single-member divisions, perhaps because it was thus hoped to eliminate more easily the occasional Liberal who slipped in third for three-member counties,² and, thanks to industrial pockets and sympathisers with the Farmers' Alliance, even second sometimes in two-member county divisions claimed for "the agricultural interest."³ In the great provincial towns, too, as well as in London the Conservative leaders had insisted on single-member divisions. This was done, it would seem, partly in the hope of disorganising the "caucus" machinery, based hitherto on undivided Parliamentary boroughs, and partly in the hope of winning for Conservatism a fair number of the "respectable residential" divisions which they had pledged the Government to separate from the industrial and working-class portions of the great towns.

But though the strategy of the Tory leaders was to be justified by the results of the next two General Elections, that was hardly obvious at once. For the time they could actually be charged instead with the main responsibility for having taken the country for another fearsome "leap in the dark" by insisting on the adoption, over the larger part of the country, of the once-dreaded Chartist "equal electoral district." It is perhaps understandable why the four Tory members for the City were able, on March 13th, to divide 117-162⁴ against the clause, accepted by their leaders, which sentenced even the City to the loss of two of its members on the Radical ground of shrunken resident population. There were formal remonstrances from the party leaders at a Carlton Club meeting of March 16th,⁵ but the Back Benchers' mutiny was renewed almost at once on the vital clause raising member-

¹ Cf. Lady G. Cecil, *op. cit.* iii, 121-2: "Though Liberal electioneers were discontented with the result, Mr. Gladstone used to affirm afterwards that on nearly all the points on which he had differed from his (Conservative) collaborators, it was he who had been the champion of Conservatism: 'I kept asking myself which was the policeman and which was the thief.'"

² Cf. Oxfordshire, Bucks, Berks, and Herts, 1880-5 (*Whitaker's Almanack*, 1885).

³ Cf. Yorks, North Riding, and Norfolk South, 1880-5 (*Whitaker's Almanack*, 1885).

⁴ *Hansard*, March 13th.

⁵ Cf. Jeyes's *Life of Salisbury*, iv, 103.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

ship of the Commons from 658 to 670.¹ In fact it will be found that, aided by the pressure of other urgent business, the mutinous Tories were successful in preventing the Redistribution Bill from emerging from Committee until May 12th. Meanwhile they had all but defeated the Government on May 5th when a Tory amendment to the English Registration Bill was only repelled by 240 votes against 238. The Government's Parliamentary Reform was enshrined not merely in the Franchise and Redistribution Bills, but also in three Registration Bills for England, Scotland, and Ireland, facilitating the new voters' path to the voters' registers. Affecting to fear the added new load of costs imposed thereby on the already over-burdened ratepayer, the Tories had taken up a particularly strong tactical position when they had demanded that Registration costs should be borne not by the ratepayer but by the Exchequer.

It is possible that the historian of the future will only find these harassing Tory tactics of importance from the effect they might, in certain circumstances, have had on the "Radical Programme's" chances at the next elections. Much else that happened during the spring of 1885 would also gain a permanent significance if related to so phenomenal a political development as Chamberlain's pertinacious efforts to turn the approaching polling into a national plebiscite on the Radical proposals. Thus the Cabinet's brief and popular display of "vigour" against Russia, during the dispute over the "Pendjeh incident" on the Afghan-Russian frontier, caused Chamberlain himself to make the rueful admission that if it led to war, all the "great reforms" that had been planned might have to be "indefinitely postponed."² Even though war was in fact avoided, the submerging of the "Radical Programme" beneath a flood of anti-Russian war excitements for several critical weeks could hardly have improved Radical prospects.

Then the Budget statement of April 30th made further trouble

¹ After this Division Mr. Bartley, an influential Conservative organiser, resigned on the ground that the Leaders were not in harmony and touch with the great body of Conservatives.

² Cf. *Chamberlain's Speeches*, p. 126, for his address at the Eighty Club, April 28th: "It is not the least evil of war that during its continuance political questions of the highest importance to the happiness of the people are necessarily put aside; and this is a result which is probably viewed with complacency by a despotic Government, and is not altogether unpalatable to reactionaries, even in our own country . . . To us it is a matter of serious pain and grief. . . ."

by giving the Tories a chance of driving a wedge between the Temperance Radicals and working men of the "beery" kind. The reigning orthodoxies in finance, under the special patronage of Mr. Gladstone as they were, practically compelled the Chancellor of the Exchequer to attempt to raise by new taxation nearly all the millions just voted "to smash the Mahdi" and to take precautionary measures against Russia. Among the measures consequently proposed on April 30th—measures which included such far from welcome items to the powerful classes affected as increased income-tax and a raid on the Sinking Fund—the most politically perilous were certainly the increased beer and spirit duties. The alliance of brewers, distillers, and publicans, which had already once before detached the greater portion of the "people" from a Gladstone Government, menacing them with decreased possibilities of liquor consumption, became very active once more.¹ And this time, the allies had the cordial support of "Tory Democrats," very ready to offer the "people" relief from the tyrannical whims of the Radical "faddists" who were alleged to be dictating Government policy (and Real Property Succession Duty enhancement!).

On June 8th Ministers were defeated in their Budget proposals despite the considerable concessions they had made since April 30th. It had, however, been clear for weeks that the Government was in mortal peril. The Opposition had planned to win some at least of the Whig county members, disgruntled already by the "Radical Programme," for an amendment which associated disappointment with the Budget's failure to give Exchequer relief to county rates with opposition to beer and spirit duties harmful to the grain farmer and burdensome to the labourer. A golden opportunity, too, had presented itself of gaining the Parnellites alliance. The Parnellites also had no special love of liquor taxation—were not the Irish village publicans often their keenest supporters?—and there was even an Irish "grievance" about spirit duties likely to diminish the market for Irish whisky.

But it was not, of course, so insignificant a "grievance" as this which was destined to bring the Parnellites into the forces marshalling against the Government. It was the eternal "Coercion"

¹ The defeat of the Government on June 8th was preceded on June 7th by a "demonstration in Hyde Park to protest against an increase in the beer and spirit duties" (*Whitaker's Almanack*, 1886, p. 280). The *Illustrated London News* (May 30th) had strongly advised the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give way in view of the *détente* with Russia.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

problem. Lord Spencer, Gladstone's Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, was asking for some renewal of the special powers which had been granted to the Irish Executive after the Phoenix Park murders of 1882 and which were soon to run out. Chamberlain and Dilke agreed to consider a limited renewal for one year but only if the Cabinet meanwhile grasped the opportunity of "settling" the Irish question by a generous grant of administrative self-government—elected county councils and over them an elected Irish National Council with large powers.¹ The Lord-Lieutenant accepted County Councils but declined to advance beyond them farther than Provincial Councils for Ulster, Leinster, Munster and Connaught, which the Radicals knew would be refused by Parnell. As the dangerously divided Cabinet could produce no agreed plan in time, coercion had temporarily to go on alone.² On May 15th, therefore, Gladstone informed the Commons that there would be another Bill giving Dublin Castle special powers against Irish sedition and disorder, and the irate Parnellites were moved to give special attention to the plans being prepared to bring about the downfall of the Government.

It was Lord Randolph Churchill, it would seem, who finally won Parnell's support for an attack on the Budget by pledging himself that, if the Gladstone Government were overthrown and a Conservative Ministry substituted, all his influence would be used to secure a Tory resolve against taking new Coercion powers.³ Thus it was that the defeat of the Government was finally brought about in the Division of 252-264 taken on June 8th. No sooner, however, had the Gladstone Cabinet resigned than it became very plain that the Tories had lost important tactical advantages by giving their opponents the chance to withdraw from office. It was virtually impossible to arrange an election before November, since the Redistribution Bill was not quite through the Lords and, even when it should be disposed of, the Voting Claims for the new Electoral Districts would still have to be examined and

¹ Cf. *Chamberlain's Speeches*, p. 134, for a Birmingham address of June 4th which sounds like an attempt to prepare Gladstone and the country for the "widest possible self-government to Ireland, which is consistent with the maintenance of the integrity of the Empire." Particularly noticeable are the references to Ireland's "national sentiment" and "national life."

² Cf. R. H. Gretton's *A Modern History of the English People, 1880-1898*, pp. 159-60, for the Fenian dynamite outrages of January 1885 in London, which had reawakened alarm. There were serious explosions in Westminster Hall and the Tower.

³ Cf. *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, by Winston Churchill, i, 395.

the Voting Registers prepared. Yet by the time this was all done, much of the anger that the Tories had stirred up against the shortcomings of over five years of Gladstonian government would have evaporated and attention would be concentrated instead upon how far behind the "Radical Programme" even the best Tory terms were. Salisbury's first advice, indeed, when summoned to Balmoral was that the Queen should invite Gladstone to resume office but, as Gladstone refused to fall into so obvious a trap, the Tory leader had perforce to undertake the construction of a Ministry.

Now Radicals were free from the embarrassments and responsibilities of keeping the Gladstone Government in office, their vigour and zest increased mightily. Thus, on June 15th, the country was given very definitely to understand that, not only did they decline to consider the Parliamentary Reforms already carried as the last word in political justice, but that they intended to amend them in one important particular even before the existing Parliament dispersed. Jesse Collings's successful Medical Relief Disqualification Bill, introduced that day, prevented many thousands, otherwise eligible for the Suffrage, from being refused admission to the Voting Registers as "paupers" merely because the "parish doctor" had been called in to them or their families. Nay, on July 23rd, Collings obtained a Division of 180 against 130¹ for making the Bill go farther. All medical and surgical attendance, recommended by the "parish doctor," was now exempted from the pauperising taint even if such treatment went beyond the "parish doctor's" contract, and so necessitated extra poor rate.

To give an adequate idea, however, of the political issues from Suffrage to Leasehold Enfranchisement, which the Radicals were putting before the country, it were best, perhaps, to quote a typical Radical election address issued at this juncture by a candidate for one of the new London "electoral districts." Here is the Address of the twenty-three-year-old H. L. W. Lawson, heir to the *Daily Telegraph* and, before long, M.P. for West St. Pancras. Dated June 27th it runs as follows:

Whilst I regret that the accidents of the hour have placed in office a Government without settled principle or policy—which possesses the confidence neither of the old electorate nor the new—I rejoice

¹ *Hansard*, July 23rd.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

at the measure of electoral reform and political emancipation which enable me to come before you.

There are obvious anomalies in our Electoral System yet to be removed. The Lodger¹ must be placed in the same position as other electors: and the right of voting by "Successive Occupation" must obtain between every constituency in the Kingdom.²

No formula should be tolerated which can enable the House of Commons to stand for a moment between a constituency and its duly elected member.³

A member of the Established Church, I advocate the fullest Religious Equality, and I believe that before long every religious community will have to trust for its strength to the voluntary efforts of its members.

Immediate Legislation on the vital question of Local Government in London is demanded. We require one Central Municipality, directly elected . . . with the details of its local business in the hands of District Councils. Thus alone can be created a Corporate Life and Political Energy comparable to that of the great industrial centres of the Midlands or the North.

The Trusts of the City must be thoroughly revised so as largely to increase the money to be spent on Technical Education in the Metropolis.

Local Government in the Rural Districts is at present a chaos of areas, rates and Authorities. Here I should advocate . . . the transfer of local powers . . . to Representative Boards.

I am strongly in favour of Temperance Legislation. The Ratepayers should have full and direct control over the licensing of houses for the sale of intoxicating drink.

A drastic Reform of our Land System is needed. Obsolete Restrictions upon its Inheritance and Transfer should be done away with. The Occupier should have security for every penny spent in the permanent improvement of his holding, and be protected against arbitrary eviction. . . . For the "hopeless drudgery" of the Farm Labourers some alleviation must be found. To provide them with fit Allotments, and to better the Houses of the Poor, local bodies must be entrusted with larger powers for the compulsory purchase of land.

¹ The lodger franchise was only conferred by the occupation of lodgings of a clear yearly value of £10 or upward if let unfurnished. Many thousands of working men, including heads of families, were disqualified by this limit.

² Lodgers and householders both had to have been in occupation of qualifying premises for at least twelve months before July 15th in order to be eligible for appearance on the Voters' List coming into force on the following January. This meant, in effect, a waiting period of between 1½ and 2½ years' disfranchisement if one had removed from another constituency. Radical watchfulness had indeed limited the extent of removal-disfranchisement by securing that it did not apply to removals from one division to another inside the limits of former Parliamentary boroughs. But even this still left removal disfranchisement a serious enough problem. The *Liberal Platform* of 1895 estimated that 30 per cent of London's working men were unable to vote because of the Tory refusal to "reform" the Registration procedure bearing on removal.

³ This passage intimated support for Bradlaugh against the Parliamentary oath.

The system of Leasehold Tenure should be modified on the lines of Mr. Broadhurst's Bill, as suggested by a majority of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor.¹

In Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, the control of their domestic concerns must be put into the hands of the inhabitants, with the double object of securing better Administration and of saving the nation's time. . . .

I wish to see Greater Economy in Public Expenditure, especially in the matter of pensions.²

There should be a Reapportionment of Rates on a large scale,³ and in Taxation the Rule of the future will be an Equality of Sacrifice for all.⁴

Attention must be paid to Social Legislation, which shall better the relations between Employers and Employed.

I wish to see every opportunity given to the working classes for physical recreation, mental culture. . . .

With reference to Imperial affairs, I hold that Policy and Morality ought not to be separated in our dealings with foreign nations, and that a high standard of National Duty should be recognised. I rejoice to think that by the wise courtesy of Mr. Gladstone the delicate and difficult negotiations with Russia have been carried to such a point that not even a Conservative Government will be able to provoke a rupture. I would see our Empire expand with a healthy and continuous growth: but I believe it will be rather in the closer union of its various parts by the bonds of common interest and common aspiration than in territorial aggrandisement. . . .

But election addresses like these and persistent and widespread Radical oratory on similar lines, continued right down to the General Election in November, were altogether less novel than some of the attempted Conservative counter-strategy. On July 6th, the very day when the new Conservative Ministers first faced Parliament, Lord Carnarvon, their Irish Viceroy, was allowed to announce that no Coercion Act would be asked for; on July 9th their Chancellor of the Exchequer made serious charges of finan-

¹ Cf. *First Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes, 1885*, especially pp. 11, 22, 59. This Commission was mainly interested in the terrible condition house-property got into just before it was due to fall in to the ground landlord. But the injustice and evil effects not merely of the building-lease terms of ground landlords, but also of their short leases to tradesmen, renewable only on the payment of fines virtually confiscatory of the goodwill the tradesmen had built up, were also under discussion. The Radical remedy suggested was Leasehold Enfranchisement—the right to compel a landlord to sell his freehold at a fair valuation.

² To judge from surviving pamphlet material the old Radical grudge against the "Pension List" still survived in full vigour.

³ This must be taken to mean that landlords were to be made responsible for part of the rates instead of the whole burden being borne by occupiers.

⁴ Chamberlain and Dilke were known to favour the graduated income-tax and higher death-duties on the rich.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

cial misrepresentation against Gladstone's First Lord of the Admiralty; on July 16th Lord Salisbury himself moved a quite advanced Housing of the Working Classes Bill,¹ and on July 17th his Irish Secretary followed suit with a "very generous" Bill for assisting Tenant Land Purchase in Ireland.² A secret interview between Parnell and Carnarvon resulted on August 1st which, dedicated as it was to negotiation on possible terms of Home Rule, was not without its ultimate effect in securing the Irish vote for Tory candidates in the British elections of November. Then on August 6th Lord Randolph Churchill made a violent attack on the alleged mismanagement of the Gladstonian Viceroy of India which, he claimed, would have put British India in mortal peril if there had been a "Pendjeh War" in April 1885; and on August 10th, just before the prorogation of Parliament, the Conservative Government made another gesture which was thought likely to have an electoral appeal. Ministers explained why they hoped that their proposed Royal Commission on the Depression of Trade might be able to point the way to better times.

Unfortunately for the Government it was found, as the election campaign progressed, that if some of their Tory-Democrat strategy tended to attract new groups towards the Conservative standard it also tended to repel others. If, for example, the sympathy proffered to Parnellite Ireland for having had to submit to Gladstonian Coercion so long, was leading towards the Tory-Parnellite electoral alliance of November, its hypocrisy also plainly disgusted and repelled the "Moderate Liberals" to the point of rendering almost vain the many Tory appeals for a joint stand against the "Radical Programme." It even proved fruitless to stress the dangers from Chamberlain's "Socialist" doctrines of "Ransom and Restitution," or to point to his manifest eagerness to begin the "plunder" of the State Churches.³ Again, the Govern-

¹ The way had been prepared by a first interim report from the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Poor appointed by their predecessors. But the Tories showed understandable alacrity in profiting from the chance of appearing as the friends of the London poor and did not shrink from considerable advances of Housing principle.

² This became the "Ashbourne Act." It provided a maximum of five millions from the invaluable "Irish Church Surplus" for advances to tenants at 4 per cent. Tenants would become full owners in forty-nine years, and meanwhile the annual instalments they were responsible for would, it was hoped, generally be 20 per cent below their rents.

³ Cf. *National Church*, November 18, 1885, for the not very imposing best that was finally achieved here in the shape of an Anti-Disestablishment Address to the Nation by "Liberal Peers and Others." Some of the "Liberal" Peers

ment's Commission on Trade Depression might win a certain amount of working-class sympathy and even ensure a surprising measure of electoral success in the Cotton areas, particularly angered by foreign tariffs as they were. But the more and more open Tory admissions that the Commission would have to consider Tariff Retaliation and Colonial Preference¹ aroused increasingly all the "dear loaf" fears implanted in the great mass of the working classes by the sorry history of the Protectionist past. Even in Lancashire and Cheshire textile constituencies, hard hit by rising foreign tariffs, the nearer the election drew, the wiser it proved to be to eschew all violent demand for "Fair Trade" and "Reciprocity," and to concentrate instead on the malevolence of the Gladstonian Opposition in refusing to take part in the Trade Depression Inquiry.²

In the new county divisions, meanwhile, agricultural labourers were plainly being won by Radical offers of elective local authorities empowered, among other things, to undertake allotment and small-holding formation from land, whose owners were to receive only the "fair price" which would permit low allotment rents. The Tory anxiety eventually felt on this score is, perhaps, most graphically illustrated in a King's Lynn speech of Lord Randolph Churchill. Attacking the "intense dishonesty" and "flagrant immorality" of the Radical party, he said:³

Their leaders are allowing—not only allowing but encouraging, not only encouraging but absolutely paying—speakers to go about the country to persuade the agricultural labourer that the result of placing the Radical party in power will be to give him three acres and a cow, when they know perfectly well that such a project is utterly hopeless, utterly absurd.

concerned had little more claim to the name than their often hereditary objection to taking the Tory Whip.

¹ Cf. *The Times*, November 5th, for Lord Salisbury's dangerously blunt speech of the previous day with its scarce-disguised sneering at the "Holy Doctrine of Free Trade."

² Cf. *Ibid.*, for Salisbury himself: "It is of the first necessity that we should, as far as we can, combat this depression, find out the causes from which it arises, so far as a Government can, and that we should apply the powers of Parliament and Government to remedy those evils. . . . It seemed to us that this was so elementary that it would so go to the heart of all who feel for the suffering of their fellow-subjects in this exceptional time, that we should meet neither with opposition nor with criticism. . . . We were bitterly disappointed. We found that our political opponents did their best . . . to make that inquiry an impossibility and to prevent us from ascertaining where the causes of the depression lay, or how it could be mitigated. . . ."

³ Quoted from Jeyes's *Life of Salisbury*, iv, 120-1.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

. . . Now, not only are the leaders of the Radical party immoral, as I hold—politically immoral and dishonest—but they positively boast of their immorality, and in any Radical circle in London, or any large town, you will find the Radical party in a state of the greatest possible exultation, and it is everywhere repeated “We shall smash the Tory Party in the country because Mr. Jesse Collings has carried the labourer with Three Acres and a Cow.” For my own part, I have a much greater opinion of the intelligence of the agricultural labourer. . . .”

But there was much else in the Radical electioneering of a nature to cause the Tories acute anxiety—from the demand for wholesale changes in the Land Laws to plans for a readjustment of taxation fairer to the poor, from the claim for the Abolition of School Pence to the suggestion that it could be more than financed from the Disendowment of State Churches. The Radical pressure, indeed, was such that when on October 7th the Tory Premier, Salisbury, addressed to the delegates of the Conservative Associations, assembled at Newport, what in the circumstances could hardly avoid being an election programme, it was felt that for all his refusal to surrender the State Churches and all his attempts to deride Chamberlain’s claims as a land reformer, he had yet offered the electors some very important concessions.¹ Chamberlain certainly thought it worth while to make a prompt reply, point by point, in order to show how much more liberal the speech sounded than it really was.² He first disposed of Lord Salisbury’s contention that Church endowments provided free religious services for the very poor by the counter-contention that most of these poor seemed to think that the money could be better spent than on maintaining the parsons.³ Next he charged Lord Salisbury with having passed over in silence the very first point in Gladstone’s domestic programme—Reform of Parliamentary Procedure—in order to leave the Tories undiminished

¹ *The Times*, October 8th.

² *Chamberlain’s Speeches*, for the Trowbridge speech of October 14th.

³ “It is for the poor and needy, and especially for the poor and needy in agricultural districts, that Lord Salisbury pleads. . . . If it should turn out that the poor and needy in agricultural districts are of a different opinion, what would Lord Salisbury say then? If it should be found that the presence of a cultivated gentleman in every parish has some drawbacks, and that he does not always use his influence and authority to the satisfaction or for the benefit of those to whom he ministers, and it should appear that the labouring poor are of opinion that the national funds might be applied to some better purpose . . . then I say that an institution that has failed to commend itself to those whom it is specially intended . . . to benefit is one whose continued existence in this special form it would be found very difficult to justify.”

freedom for obstructing legislation in Commons and Lords. Then he went on to his most striking passage:¹

I admire the skill with which Lord Salisbury has contrived to interweave the old Liberal watchwords with Tory doctrines, and to conceal the intention to maintain existing abuses, under the old familiar Liberal names. You will find, for instance, reference in his speech to local government, to local option, to free education, to the revision of taxation, and to the cheapening of land. But . . . you will find that in using these words he does not mean anything of that which we have always intended by them. . . . Let us take first the question of local government. . . . You will find our proposals complete in every detail. I will only say briefly of them . . . that they comprise the idea of a thoroughly popular local government in every village, in every union, in every county, which shall be given the largest powers and widest discretion. . . . But what does Lord Salisbury mean by local government? . . . He takes credit for the interest which the Conservative party have always taken in the question. . . . The whole of their scheme was devised in order to maintain the influence of the county magistrates and the landed gentry . . . and even now Lord Salisbury cannot conceal his innate distrust of popular government. . . . When he comes to consider the proposal that these local authorities, representing all the ratepayers and all the householders, should have some powers to purchase land and let it for allotments . . . he rejects the proposal altogether, and . . . decides all at once that these great authorities would become the servile instruments of the Birmingham caucus, and a great machinery for political corruption. . . .

Now, let us look at his proposals with regard to the liquor traffic. . . . We trust the people, and we trust them wholly, and we are willing that the whole of this great question should be left absolutely to the representative authorities which will be elected throughout the country. But Lord Salisbury cannot go so far. . . . He has to do something for the temperance party, and, therefore, he is for local option on Sundays and for compulsory drinking all the rest of the week. . . .

I am inclined to apply much the same criticism to what Lord Salisbury says about education. He is not prepared to make schools wholly free, but he is willing to increase the proportion of free orders—in other words, he says he has no objection to a continually enlarging number of persons being compelled to apply to boards of guardians in order that the fees may be paid as a kind of pauper relief. . . .

It remains to sum up the final result of all this electoral activity. In 1880 an electorate of 3,038,726 had yielded an aggregate Liberal Vote of 1,147,976, an aggregate Conservative vote of 891,326, an aggregate Parnellite vote of 58,586, a percentage of the voters polled of 69 and, finally, a Commons House of 354

¹ *Chamberlain's Speeches*, pp. 241-3.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

Liberals, 237 Conservatives, and 61 Home Rulers. In 1885 the electorate had been raised to 5,711,920, the total Liberal vote was 2,156,952, the total Conservative vote 1,934,316, the total Parnellite vote 299,784, the percentage of voters polled 76·8, and the composition of the Commons, 333 Liberals, 251 Conservatives, and 86 Home Rulers. The professional composition of the Commons was, as far as these things can be set out at all, Lawyers 95 (37 Q.C.s, 36 Barristers, 22 Solicitors), Country Gentlemen 78, Manufacturers 57, Army 47, Merchants 36, Journalists 31, Bankers 27, Coalowners and Ironmasters 27, Brewers and Distillers 20, Shipowners 19, Doctors 16, Tradesmen 14, Professors 12, Navy 11, and, finally, an Artisan contingent of 11 pro-Gladstonian "Labour" M.P.s, 6 pitmen, a joiner, a bricklayer, a mason, a glassblower, and an agricultural labourer. Lastly may be set out the formal adhesions obtained in the new House of Commons by "advanced" causes. Local Option had 315 M.P.s pledged and committed; Women's Suffrage 276; Contagious Diseases Acts Abolition 251;¹ a pro-Bradlaugh Affirmation Bill 195; Dis-establishment 176; London Municipal Reform 106, and the People's League for the Abolition of the Lords 80.²

For a considerable time before the polling it had been clear that the Tories had valuable election material in Trade Depression, the "death of Gordon," and the indifferent Gladstonian record in South Africa, Egypt, and Afghanistan. Even the prejudices excited against Bradlaugh's Atheism must not be neglected in estimating why the expert electioneers were early forecasting that Tory representation in the Commons would probably be large enough, despite the Reform Bill, to allow Parnell to "hold the balance." Irish legislation might then not merely have to take precedence of everything else, but, in certain circumstances of Parnellite intransigency, the whole programme of Social Reform might have to be indefinitely postponed. In his long election address of September 17th Gladstone had adjured Parnell, almost by name, not to be uncompromising. "I believe," he had written, "history and posterity will consign to disgrace the name and memory of every man . . . that having the power to aid in an equit-

¹ A reflection of the energy which Josephine Butler and James Stansfeld, M.P., had so long thrown against the special "Garrison Town" legislation aimed at "preventing" Venereal Diseases.

² The statistics are from the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Extra No. 21, issued in December 1885, as soon as all the results were in.

able settlement between Ireland and Great Britain, shall use that power not to aid, but to prevent or to retard it." Later he had appealed to the electors to return one of the British parties with a sufficient majority to legislate independently of the Irish vote. "It will be a vital danger to the country and to the empire," he had declared in Midlothian on November 9th, "if at a time when a demand from Ireland for larger powers of self-government is to be dealt with, there is not in Parliament a party totally independent of the Irish vote."¹

Parnell meanwhile was almost cynically confident of the result of the election procedures which had been set in motion. Suffrage Extension, with its admission of hundreds of thousands of new "cabinholders" to the franchise, and left him so free to arrange the extermination of those "Irish Liberals," who had hitherto refused to take his orders, that the final Parnellite figure of 86 M.P.s could hardly have surprised him. Meanwhile, sure of some such following, he planned to make use of the intense rivalry between the British parties. Having tried but failed to commit Gladstone to specific Home Rule proposals, Parnell resolved on an eve-of-the-poll announcement calculated to reduce the expected Gladstonian majority over the Tories to the lowest possible measure. On November 21st the Irish electors of Great Britain were called on to vote against "the men who coerced Ireland, deluged Egypt with blood, menaced religious liberty in the school, the freedom of speech in Parliament, and promise to the country generally a repetition of the crimes and follies of the last Liberal Administration."² Coming when it did, the furious Irish manifesto was estimated to have cost the Gladstonians from twenty to forty seats and to have been one of the main factors in robbing them of a majority over Tories and Parnellites combined.

But though the Parnellite manifesto scored a great tactical success for the moment, its long-range effects were to prove less happy.³ Radicals as well as "Moderate Liberals" were thoroughly outraged by Parnell's apparently complete lack of scruple.⁴ If, indeed, Salisbury had persisted with his attempt to allow his Irish

¹ Cf. Morley's *Gladstone* (ed. 1908), ii, 357.

² R. B. O'Brien's *Life of Parnell* (ed. 1910), p. 370.

³ Cf. Morley's *Gladstone*, ii, 362-3, for the considered opinion of one who was about to become Irish Secretary.

⁴ Cf. R. B. O'Brien's *Parnell*, pp. 386, 390-1, for Chamberlain on Parnell's "unscrupulousness" as it seemed to him in 1898. Radicals took a less charitable view in 1885-6.

Approach of the General Election of 1885

Lord-Lieutenant to find a basis of settlement with the Parnellites, Radical fury would have mattered less. But Salisbury and the vast bulk of the Tory party were already so sick of the results of a "new Irish policy" that had quickly allowed boycotting and other "lawlessness" to multiply, that they determined to open the 1886 Session with a Queen's Speech whose most notable passage was virtually a demand for another Coercion Bill. After they were brought down on January 26th by a combined Gladstonian and Parnellite vote, not indeed on Coercion but on small holdings, the full effect of the aggravated Radical suspicion of Parnell gradually revealed itself. No two men finally did more to destroy the Home Rule Bill of the Gladstone Government of 1886 than Chamberlain and Bright—and their main reason was complete distrust of what a Parnellite Irish Parliament might contrive to do despite all the suggested "safeguards."¹ Their position was almost tragic for they were fully aware that, in defeating the Gladstone Government, they were probably destroying their best hopes of achieving rapid progress in the realisation of Radical aims.²

¹ Bright received on May 13th a personal appeal from Gladstone. He answered: "If I could believe them (the Irish party) loyal, if they were honourable and truthful men, I could yield them much . . . but I do not think it justice or wisdom for Great Britain to consign her population, including Ulster and all her Protestant families, to what there is of justice and wisdom in the Irish party now sitting in the Parliament in Westminster."

² Cf. Trevelyan's *Life of Bright*, p. 456, for Bright on "a catastrophe the magnitude of which cannot be measured."

“LABOUR” AND THE BIRTH OF BRITISH SOCIALISM, 1874-86

“Why was it that if a Trade Unionist tried to persuade a fellow workman (by picketing) that it would be to his interest to join a union or to pay up his arrears of contributions, or that his labour was worth more than he was receiving, that he was liable to three months’ imprisonment . . . while the merchant on change who had cotton to sell—and a man’s labour was his own, just as the merchant’s cotton was his own—might persuade another merchant that he must not sell it under a certain price; or that employers could send black lists through the country and get men discharged with impunity? Why was it, then, in all the contracts that were made daily and hourly in this country, the non-fulfilment of such was proceeded against by a civil process while a breach of a labour contract should be punished with imprisonment? How was it that men leaving their work without giving notice were liable to three months’ imprisonment, and for agreeing to do so might be sent to prison for twelve months, as in the case of the gas-stokers? How was it that they were legislated for with more stringent laws than the criminals of the country? . . .”

T.U.C. Presidential Address, Liverpool, January 19, 1875 (a perfect example of the “Trades” oratory of the pre-Socialist age).

“A trade unionist writing to *The Times* says that the number of men represented at the annual congress has diminished from over 1,200,000 in 1873 to about 500,000 in 1884. This diminution he attributes to depression of trade, but it would be more like the truth to say that it was due to distrust of trade union leaders.”

“Justice,” November 15, 1884, attacks the non-Socialist T.U.C. leaders.

“In all circles of society and all classes of the community the position of the London Socialists still monopolises attention. The readers of the newspapers—Tory, Whig, and Radical—are apt to be deceived into the belief that the London Socialists are after all a very insignificant body. Even the Radical weekly press which is supposed to represent the views of a large section of the working classes assign to Socialists the most infinitesimal influence and condemn the action of the leaders, whom they dismiss as braggarts and self-seekers. But the fact

remains uncontroverted that the Socialists are a great power. The Government know it, the police admit it, and the unhappy condition of tens of thousands of the people have given the movement force. In preparation for the demonstration on Lord Mayor's Day numerous meetings have been held night after night without intermission for weeks past. . . ."

Manchester "Examiner and Times" quoted by "Justice,"
October 30, 1886.

ON February 8, 1886, while the "political world" was busily following Gladstone's difficult construction of a Cabinet pledged to the consideration of Irish self-government, there occurred the first of a series of "unemployed riots"¹ which ushered in a new era of politics even more certainly than the Home Rule controversy. It is not the object of this chapter to study the exciting developments in working-class agitation that were to take place almost continuously from 1886 to 1895. Here the business must be confined to a rapid survey of the intellectual ferments, which already by 1886 were far enough advanced to permit "Labour" to be offered a very different social platform from the jejune medley of anti-landlord and anti-extravagance cries that we have seen the Labour Representation League of 1875 borrowing from the narrower "commercial Radicals."²

To make an examination, year by year, of the records of the Trades Union Congress and its Parliamentary Committee is to become convinced that the impulse of "Labour" towards Socialism had to come from the outside. It is not that the T.U.C. programmes did not agitate reforms very important to the working classes. On the contrary, the reforms pressed for were of the highest value. But it followed almost of necessity from the very

¹ G. Elton's *England Arise!*, p. 128, for the immediate sequel: "Next morning, however, Britain, waking to its newspapers, rubbed its eyes. Windowless Clubland impressed it even more than plundered shops. . . . For a few days it was ready to believe almost anything—even that its own working classes, whom it had never known, were ready to revolt. Riotous, or at least threatening meetings were reported from Norwich, from Birmingham and Northampton, from Sheffield and Great Yarmouth and Manchester. . . . Two days later, on the tenth, London at least believed that the Revolution had actually begun. It was a day of dense fog and somehow the report ran through the town like a forest fire that John Burns at the head of sixty thousand men was marching on the West End. . . ."

² *Supra*, p. 125n.

nature of the T.U.C., composed as it was of the most tried and trusted "practical" administrators of the trades, that its leanings were towards reforms of a "practical" character. This partiality towards what a modern Communist would call "petty tinkering with the system" was powerfully reinforced by two other factors. First, there was no body of coherent Socialist doctrine to compete against Radicalism for British working-class support until the middle 80's—and even then the new doctrine was for long years under the suspicion of the middle-aged and elderly as "unpractical." On the other hand, the small but very able group of professional men who had given the Congress such invaluable assistance in the struggle for the better Trades code of 1875—Frederic Harrison, Professor Beesly, Henry Crompton, A. J. Mundella, M.P., and R. S. Wright—had from their legal knowledge and experience a wealth of "practical" suggestions to offer on desirable emendations of the law in the interests of working men.¹

Even so these suggestions were not combined with the leading political aspirations of the "Trades" and adopted year after year as the T.U.C. Parliamentary programme without some misgivings and searchings of heart among the more conservative. It actually needed an effort on the part of the more combative Trades leaders both in 1875 and 1876 to prevent the annual Trades Union Congresses and the Parliamentary Committee, which acted as their permanent organ, from being wound up as no longer necessary now that the Trade Union legislation of 1875 had been obtained.² Such things and the parallel doubts of 1876, for example, as to whether a "Labour Representation" resolution was going to be adopted without trouble³ become more explicable when it is remembered that from the beginning of 1874 the effects of the "great depression" had been playing havoc with the membership and the funds

¹ S. and B. Webb's *History of Trade Unionism* (ed. 1902), n. pp. 348-9, has an important communication from Mr. Crompton to the writers explaining the motives from which he and the others acted. It is significant that a breach occurred when in 1881 the Harrison-Beesly group tried to get the T.U.C. to take the "unpractical" step of fighting Irish Coercion. Though they argued that some of the Coercion doctrines and methods would be available in the case of British Trade disputes, they failed to move the T.U.C.

² Cf. W. J. Davis, *History of the British T.U.C.*, p. 52.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 58-60: "Before the debate the proportions of direct Labour representation were an unknown quantity; certainly many of the delegates were in doubt, and the discussion cleared the mist which was then hanging over the whole Labour movement." The resolution was finally carried by 73-9.

"Labour" and the Birth of British Socialism 1874-1886

even of strongly established Trade Societies. By 1879 the position was almost catastrophic and possibly at its worst.¹ Only 92 Societies were represented at the T.U.C. of that year instead of the 114 of 1878; the number of delegates sent was 102 instead of 123, and the membership for whom they acted at 542,892 showed a decline of 82,065 from the corresponding figure of 1878.² It is, perhaps, a sufficient commentary on these figures to quote the following from the historian of the Trades Union Congress:³ "Men disbanded from their Trade Unions in thousands. . . . During 1878 four trade societies—the Engineers, the Carpenters, the Ironfounders, and the Boilermakers—whose aggregate membership was only 93,714, paid in out-of-work benefit considerably over a quarter of a million pounds. In 1879 the Ironfounders were . . . in debt."

In these discouraging circumstances the T.U.C. leaders were, from their own point of view, showing considerable venturesomeness in resolving not merely to carry on their normal Congress programme in 1879 but also to hear one lawyer-friend, Henry Crompton, on reasons why they should support a Summary Jurisdiction Bill and another, R. S. Wright, on how they would benefit from large alterations of the Land Laws. The General Election of April 1880 gave the Parliamentary Committee chosen by this Congress an opportunity to circularise the Trade Unions on the pledges that they should seek to secure from candidates. As the pledge-list sums up in a convenient form all that Trades opinion had been busy with of late it is worth giving in full. Candidates were asked:⁴

Will you support:

A Bill to amend the law of compensation in cases of accidents, so that workmen or their families may recover from an employer in the event of injury or death from accidents due to negligence?

A Bill to reform the administration of justice by limiting the summary

¹ *The Report of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants for 1889*, p. 22, shows that the membership position of some Societies at least went on declining for years after 1879. Here is its membership for a series of years: 1872, 17,247; 1873, 15,830; 1874, 14,254; 1875, 13,018; 1876, 13,440; 1877, 12,815; 1878, 13,543; 1879, 11,516; 1880, 8,589; 1881, 6,878; 1882, 6,321; 1883, 8,077; 1884, 8,460; 1885, 9,052; 1886, 9,609; 1887, 10,830; 1888, 12,080; 1889, 19,585.

² W. J. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 75. Considerable deductions from the membership totals are probably called for in view of occasional double representation by Trade Union delegates and those of local Trades Councils.

³ W. J. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

jurisdiction of magistrates, especially in securing the right of appeal and trial by jury?

A Bill to extend the Employers and Workmen Act (1876) to British seamen when in British waters?

An increase in the number of factory and workshop inspectors?

A Bill to reform the Patent Laws?

A Bill for the Abolition of Imprisonment for Debt?

A redistribution of political power by extension of household suffrage to the counties, and rearrangement of the division of seats?

The extension of the hours of polling till 8 p.m., to provincial boroughs?

The payment out of the rates of the returning officer's charges at Parliamentary elections?

This almost ideal example of a "practical" programme enjoyed the success it deserved, and concessions on most of the points it had raised had been obtained before the Parliament of 1880 was dissolved. But it is the defect of "practical" programmes that they ultimately do little to end the sense of injustice caused by unaltered basic conditions. Thus the T.U.C., having obtained the Employers' Liability Bill of 1880, was in 1881 complaining bitterly of "its permissive character" and "proving that hundreds of thousands of workers were forced to contract themselves out of the benefits of the Act by railway and other Companies."¹ In 1882, again, in the midst of a Congress set busily to demand a most varied programme of Employers' Liability extension, increase of the factory inspectorate, payment of members, better inspection of boilers, Patent Act reform, household franchise for the counties, reduction of the "property qualification"² for Poor Law Guardians and the like, the "Front Bench," as the Parliamentary Committee came to be called, suddenly received an awkward jolt. Ignoring its recommendation that a mere resolution of regret should be passed that the Royal Commission on the Land Laws had not suggested "substantial reforms," the full Congress, truer to Ultra-Radical principles, insisted by 71-31 "that no reform will be complete short of nationalisation."

The Congresses of 1883 and 1884, however, were to find the "practical" politicians in full control. Thus in 1883 the Land Nationalisers were defeated and so were those who tried to commit

¹ W. J. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

² It was actually a rating qualification. The T.U.C. was interesting itself in the abolition or reduction of all qualifications whether for Boards of Guardians, Town Councils, Juries, or the Bench in order to permit access to the working classes. See Chapter XXIV below for information on qualifications.

"Labour" and the Birth of British Socialism 1874-1886

the T.U.C. to Manhood Suffrage instead of Franchise Extension. In 1884, again, the Parliamentary Committee gave the Gladstone Government some invaluable assistance in the Franchise Bill struggle against the House of Lords while tactfully restraining the full Congress, when it met, from passing extreme resolutions against the Peers.¹ The "practical" politicians of the T.U.C. were here adding conspicuously to the assistance they had already given the Gladstonian Government on "Fair Trade" and the Irish Question—on which last, indeed, they had broken with groups of "advanced" Radicals, who had rendered them important services, rather than allow the T.U.C. to be used against Irish Coercion.² The Gladstone Government, for its part, was not ungrateful, and imposing was the reward of the "practical." Part of the T.U.C. programme passed on to the Statute Book under official auspices; T.U.C. delegations to the Home Office on Mines and Factory inspection were received with cordiality; and two or three of the most "suitable" of the Labour leaders were actually invited into the Inspectorate themselves. Nor was this all. The Parliamentary Committee was able to tell the T.U.C. of 1885 how Trevelyan as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster had made a beginning with the appointment of "Labour" J.P.s; and later in the year the Liberal Headquarters did a good deal to clear the electoral path for the eleven "Labour" M.P.s who issued from the 1885 Elections.

The climax to this order of "Labour progress" came when Gladstone constructed his third Government in February 1886. Henry Broadhurst, M.P., who had dominated the T.U.C. for years as Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, was appointed Under-Secretary of State for Home Affairs.³ At the Board of Trade, too, A. J. Mundella, the new President, decided to set

¹ Cf. W. J. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

² Henry Crompton told the Webbs (*History of Trade Unionism*, ed. 1902, pp. 348-9, n. 1): "The divergence came with the advent of the Gladstonians to office. The Liberal Government began a policy of coercion in Ireland . . . The Positivists endeavoured to the utmost of their ability to rouse the working classes to a sense of the danger of these proceedings. . . . The Parliamentary Committee would have none of it. They no doubt believed that the interests of their clients would be best served . . . by seeking the help and favour of the eminent statesmen in office."

³ Cf. *Henry Broadhurst, M.P., The Story of His Life, told by Himself*. Born in 1840 he had worked as a stonemason until 1872. In 1875 he had succeeded George Howell as Secretary of the Parliamentary Committee of the T.U.C., and had held it ever since, though in 1880 he had entered Parliament as M.P. for Stoke.

up a Labour Department, and to it he appointed John Burnett who had made his great reputation by successful leadership in the 1871 Tyneside dispute that had won the Engineers the "Nine Hour Day."¹ Finally Herschell as Lord Chancellor decided on an imitation of Trevelyan's previous example at the Duchy of Lancaster and commissioned the first two "workmen magistrates" outside Lancashire.²

In a more naïve and prosperous time, all this "Labour Progress" might have served very effectively to screen the rotten places of the social system. Even as it was, the formidable amount of semi-hypocritical praise that began to be lavished upon the wonderful Constitution, which permitted poor working-class lads to become Factory Inspectors, J.P.s, and Members of Parliament, proved no help to "advanced" causes. For one thing, the T.U.C. beneficiaries of the new Gladstonian policy of training "Labour" for "responsibility" could hardly be prevented from feeling that things were not so bad after all when their virtues were meeting with such hitherto unobtainable rewards. The kind of "Front Bench" complacency, which was to call out Keir Hardie's famous protest of 1887, is, perhaps, best instanced by an event of 1884. Three prominent Labour figures, two of them Broadhurst and Burnett, had been deputed to attend the first International Labour Congress at Paris in October 1883. "In commenting on their report" we are told "the full (Parliamentary) Committee found there was too much talk of revolutionary principles, and too little on practical questions for the Congress to be of service to the workers."³

Fortunately, however, for the prospects of continued and violent social agitation in England, the vast bulk even of Trade Unionists were strangers to the manoeuvres of the "practical politicians" of the T.U.C.—and this was truer still of the millions of poorer paid workers who were not in Unions at all and vastly outnumbered the rest. Throughout the years between 1880 and 1885 the agitations had been growing which, in 1886 and afterwards, were to raise the whole of these "masses" in a more urgent and even threatening demand for improved social conditions than anyone had foreseen as likely. Of course, it would be folly to deny the fundamental importance of what might be called the

¹ Cf. *Cyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* for a biographical note.

² W. J. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

³ W. J. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

"Labour" and the Birth of British Socialism 1874-1886

"normal" agitating agencies—in politics of the Radicals and in industry of the Unions. But it was not they who imported Socialism into the argument and so altered the whole character of politico-economic debate.

The first approach of "Marxism" to the British political scene was, perhaps, in the fraternal greeting sent to the T.U.C. of 1879 by the German Trade Unions. Infinitely more important was to prove the chance perusal of a French edition of Marx's *Kapital* by the prosperous thirty-eight-year-old H. M. Hyndman, a "commercial man" with an Eton and Cambridge past and in 1880 bound to America "on business."¹ As has been said, "the gigantic, erudite, and essentially foreign manifesto came to him with the force of a revelation."² Henceforward Socialism in England was to have a singularly forceful and determined propagator who had already revealed a journalistic *flair* and a taste for championing the "oppressed"³ and who, in the opening stages at least of his long apostolate, was very well endowed with this world's goods and very ready to spend them on "the cause."

How Hyndman obtained his interviews with Marx in the winter of 1880-1, how he planned a revival of Chartism and contributed the remarkable *Dawn of a Revolutionary Epoch*⁴ to the *Nineteenth Century* of January 1881 and how, finally, after completing the preliminary approaches, he summoned to the Westminster Palace Hotel on June 8, 1881, the Conference of delegates of Radical and Working Men's Clubs and Irish Committees which set up the Democratic Federation—all this has often been told. Here it is necessary to point out that though Hyndman was already in touch with the full currents of Continental Socialism,⁵ though

¹ H. M. Hyndman, *The Record of an Adventurous Life* (1911), and *Further Reminiscences* (1912), for the full story.

² G. Elton, *England Arise!*, p. 29.

³ He had been special correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* during the Italian fighting of 1866, whither he had gone with ardent Garibaldian sympathies; and after extensive travel between 1868 and 1870 he had embraced the cause of native India with some effect (1877-9).

⁴ This article was placed first in the January number, and was allowed eighteen sides in the most important monthly of the day. It was written before Hyndman's evolution into a revolutionary Marxist was complete. (See especially pp. 14-15, *Nineteenth Century*, January 1881.)

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-9: "And now we see the Commune day after day glorified in journals of the highest influence . . . none could have anticipated that Communist principles would so soon make head again. . . . Yet the Communism of France, though perhaps more outspoken, is not as a whole so dangerous to the existing principles which govern society as the Socialism of Germany. . . . The Nihilism of Russia may possibly be the spark to fire the whole European magazine of combustibles. . . ."

the *England for All*¹ he presented to the delegates of June 1881 was based on the full Marxian creed, the English scene even in its most advanced quarters was not yet prepared for the adoption of doctrinal Socialism. This is shown as much by the very title taken by the new Federation—it was not turned from the Democratic Federation into the Social Democratic Federation until August 1884—as by its foundation programme. There is nothing specifically Marxian about a list of aims embracing Adult Suffrage; Triennial Parliaments; Equal Electoral Districts; Payment of Members; Payment of Election Expenses out of Local Rates; Bribery of Electors a Felony; Abolition of the House of Lords as a legislative body; Legislative Independence of Ireland; a Federal Parliament including representatives of colonies and dependencies; and Nationalisation of the Land. Only during the course of 1884 was the Marxian position finally attained and the Federation's ultimate aim declared to be the "Socialisation of the Means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange."²

Meanwhile the Federation's message was being taken to the "millions" by the strenuous personal labours of Hyndman and his dozen or so of "really earnest" members. Their exhausting and often discouraging oratorical Sunday rounds between the Radical Clubs and the Ultra-Radical speaking-pitches at Mile End Waste, Burdett Road, Clerkenwell Green, Bermondsey, Walworth, and Battersea have frequently been described. Persistence, however, won the Federation speakers a certain hearing, and this Hyndman endeavoured to increase by leading the democratic cry against "Irish Coercion" on the one hand, and, on the other, by offering Socialist panaceas for the prevailing distress in a series of public discussions on "Practical Remedies for Pressing Needs." By the time this new campaign opened early in 1883 the Democratic Federation must be held to have estab-

¹ Cf. Mrs. Hyndman's *The Last Years of H. M. Hyndman*, p. 68, for a characteristic detail: "To everybody at the Palace Hotel meeting Hyndman gave a blue-cloth-covered copy of *England for All*, the title-page of which carried the dedication to 'the Democratic and Working Men's Clubs of Great Britain and Ireland.' The cover was stamped 'The New Party.'"

² *Justice*, January 19, 1884, the first number of the Federation's new weekly, still contained a programme offering nothing characteristically Marxist. The nine points of 1881 had been made still more Ultra-Radical (by substituting Annual for Triennial Parliaments and asking for the "Abolition of the House of Lords and all Hereditary Authorities") and three new points added, viz.: (10) Free Justice; (11) Disestablishment and Disendowment of all State Churches; (12) The power of Declaring War, Making Peace, or Ratifying Treaties to be vested in the direct Representatives of the People.

“Labour” and the Birth of British Socialism 1874-1886

lished itself and to have familiarised the politicians of working-class London with its name and proceedings.¹ When the *Saturday Review* could jeeringly write about this time that “London contains a large floating population of public-house loafers and members of the Executive Committee of the Democratic Federation” it is plain that the Democratic Federation was already becoming a possible extremist rallying-point if there should come a revolutionary situation.

During 1883 and 1884 the influence and scope of the Federation were to show a steady increase. It could not but profit, of course, from the large variety of anti-landlord propaganda that was going on on all hands—whether the limited criticism of “moderate Radicals” with demands confined to the Abolition of Primogeniture and Entail; or the more advanced agitation of the Land Nationalisation Society² advocating landlord-expropriation though with compensation; or, finally, the “extreme” though tremendously popular call of Henry George’s *Progress and Poverty*³ for the public appropriation of landlord incomes through the “Single Tax.” The Federation profited even more obviously from the very definite *malaise* of important sections of the “middle classes” in a Society whose “faith” and economic ideas appeared alike to be mere survivals of barbarism.⁴ William Morris, for example,

¹ Elton, *England Arise!*, p. 52.

² A. R. Wallace, *My Life*, ii, Chapter 34, for the support which gathered round this distinguished scientist.

³ Tom Mann’s *Memoirs* assign an important place in his progress towards Socialism to his reading of Henry George. By 1884 he was a member of the Battersea branch of the Federation whose most prominent member when he joined was already John Burns (p. 38). Mann’s first out-door speaking-pitches were in the Old Kent Road and Victoria Park. He was also working inside his Union, the A.S.E.

⁴ The two most powerful exponents of this *malaise* in literature were Carlyle and Ruskin. Though Carlyle ended up as an anti-democrat, it was only because he felt himself being driven to make the most tremendous and damaging protests against the hideous muddle and disorder which capitalist-dominated “democracy” was bringing with it. Ruskin, beginning his protest as an artist horrified by the ugliness of the mass-produced articles which nineteenth-century “civilisation” was pouring out with such profusion and self-gratulation, was forced on to the replanning of Society on a basis which was almost Communitistic, though with some Christian tintings. The revived “Christian Socialism” of the 1880’s was largely based on Ruskin, and readers of *The Political Economy of Art* (1857), *Unto this Last* (1862), and the long *Fors Clavigera* series of *Letters to the Working Men and Labourers of Great Britain* (1871-84) will appreciate why. But the famous attack on the Church, as it was, in the *Fors* for January 1875 was almost as scathing in its way as the vituperative analysis of the European “civilised nation” in the *Fors* for July 1876. It was not for nothing that the working man, Tom Mann, and the artist, William Morris, would alike ascribe a large part of their Socialism to the influence of Ruskin.

joined the Federation in January 1883 and for the next ten years gave of his best to the Socialist propaganda.¹ Even more important in some respects was the support of the poet, Edward Carpenter, writer of the remarkable *Towards Democracy*.² It was he who provided the £300 which allowed the Federation to launch its historic weekly, *Justice*, in January 1884.³ Two other "middle-class" members of the Federation, the musical littérateur, E. B. Bax, and the ex-Eton Master, J. L. Joynes, were simultaneously launching a Socialist monthly, *To-Day*. To remember, further, that another member, H. H. Champion, had already since June 1883 been concerned with the 1d. *Christian Socialist* monthly, and that on November 23, 1883, he committed the group that was about to become the Fabian Society to Socialist ideals⁴ is to grasp still more of the middle-class "restlessness" that was pioneering the way for British Socialism.

There is plenty of evidence, in fact, to show that by 1884 apprehension of the growing propaganda of Socialists and quasi-Socialists was increasing fast enough to promote the growth of a whole literature of opposition.⁵ Of this literature the weightiest example, perhaps, was *The Progress of the Working Classes in the last Half-Century*, by Robert Giffen, the statistician. That Gladstone himself should have expressed warm approval and have encouraged the Cobden Club to reprint it for cheap circulation

¹ Mackail's *Life of William Morris*, ii, Chapter 15. Morris thus explained himself to a Radical friend whom he was trying to convert: "I used to think that one might further real Socialistic progress by doing what one could on the lines of ordinary middle-class Radicalism: I have been driven of late into the conclusion that I was mistaken: that Radicalism is on the wrong line, so to say, and will never develop into anything more than Radicalism; in fact that it is made for and by the middle classes and will always be under the control of rich capitalists; they will have no objection to its *political* development, if they think they can stop it there: but as to real social changes, they will not allow them if they can help it: you may see almost any day such phrases as 'this is the proper way to stop the spread of socialism' in the Liberal papers. . . . Meantime I can see no use in people having political freedom unless they use it as an instrument for leading reasonable and manlike lives; no good even in education if, when they are educated, people have only slavish work to do, and have to live lives too much beset with sordid anxiety. . . ."

² Edward Carpenter's *My Days and Dreams* for the story.

³ E. B. Bax's *Reminiscences*, p. 75.

⁴ E. R. Pease, *History of the Fabian Society*, pp. 31-2, for the resolution, carried unanimously, that "the members of the Society assert that the Competitive system assures the happiness and comfort of the few at the expense of the suffering of the many and that Society must be reconstituted in such a manner as to secure the general welfare and happiness."

⁵ Including such tracts as J. Platt's *Poverty*, the first anti-Socialist products of Herbert Spencer and W. H. Mallock, and the first edition of John Rae's *Contemporary Socialism*.

“Labour” and the Birth of British Socialism 1874-1886

among the working classes¹ is proof enough of the necessity that was felt of issuing an authoritative contradiction to the Socialistic thesis that the rich were getting richer and the poor poorer. Giffen's figures, now broadcast over the country, indicated a considerably increased *per capita* consumption of many kinds of food,² and in addition an attempt was made to use them to prove that in the textile, engineering, and house-building trades “the workman gets from 50 to 100 per cent more money for 20 per cent less work”³ than he had done fifty years before. Nay, Giffen even stretched his statistical conscience in order to undertake the minimisation of the havoc that increased house-rents and meat prices had played with the boasted wage-increases,⁴ chose to ignore altogether the effects of Short Time and Unemployment,⁵ and concluded on as mendacious a note as the following:⁶

¹ The 1884 copies circulated at 3d. are marked as “Distributed by the Cobden Club,” and give on p. 2 the following message from Gladstone to Giffen: “I have read with great pleasure your masterly paper. It is probably in form and substance the best answer to George: and I hope it may be practicable to give it a wide circulation.”

² E.g. that between 1841 and 1881 the amount of sugar imported per head had risen from 15·2 lb. to 67·36 lb., the amount of currants and raisins from 1·45 lb. to 4·34 lb., and the amount of tea from 1·22 lb. to 4·58 lb.

³ *Progress of the Working Classes in the last Half-Century*, p. 8.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12, on house-rent: “We have heard a great deal lately of the high prices of rooms in the slums. When we take things in the mass, however, we find that however much some workmen may suffer, house rent in the aggregate cannot have gone up in a way to neutralise to any serious extent the great rise in the money wages. . . . It may be pointed out that houses are undoubtedly of better value all round than they were fifty years ago. More rent is paid because more capital is in the houses, and they are better houses. . . . The increase of rent for the same accommodation, there is consequently reason to believe, has not been nearly so great as these figures would appear to show. . . .” The absence of all notice of increasing ground-rents is particularly significant.

Ibid., p. 11, on meat: “The truth is, however, that meat fifty years ago was not the workman's diet as it has since become. The kind of meat which was mainly accessible to the workman fifty years ago, viz. bacon, has not increased sensibly in price. . . .”

⁵ Cf. Prof. H. S. Foxwell's *Irregularity of Employment*, etc. (1886), p. 13: “The wages of artisans as paraded in statistical reports and the columns of the press sound fairly adequate. We hear with complacency of 18s. or 20s. per week as the remuneration of unskilled labour in towns; but few, except those in constant contact with the poor, know how very precarious such wages often are—how for weeks and weeks a man . . . will often not average 8s. or 9s. and sometimes for long periods even nothing at all.”

⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 28. It must have been notorious to Giffen and the Statistical Society, which he was addressing in the *Progress of the Working Classes*, that large incomes especially of the “unearned” class would have provided, in their progress from 1843 to 1883, some remarkable confirmations of the charges of Henry George and the Socialists. Indeed, even Giffen's statistics assume that the income of the “capitalist class from capital” had increased from the 190 millions of 1843 to the 400 millions of 1883. . . . Yet he arranged a set of figures which allowed him blandly to claim that the average fortune of the “capitalist class” had merely increased from the £2,200 of 1835 to the £2,500 of 1883.

Thus the rich have become more numerous, but not richer individually: the "poor" are, to some smaller extent, fewer: and those who remain "poor" are, individually, twice as well off on the average as they were fifty years ago. The "poor" have thus had almost all the benefit of the great material advance of the last fifty years.

Hyndman, meanwhile, with his usual resource had in April 1884 known how to gain his cause further advertisement by staging a public debate between himself and Bradlaugh. In October he went on to the audacity of causing his few scores of pledged followers to adopt a British Socialist programme more all-embracing even than that of Germany with its hundreds of thousands of Socialists.¹ Nor did he quail in December 1884 when his methods forced out of his organisation a band of distinguished members, headed by Morris, who decided to set up their own Socialist League. There was, indeed, widely spread throughout the early Socialist movement a serene confidence in the inevitability of Socialism—a belief that some sudden turn of events, some sudden crack in the rotten shorings of the existing order, would throw the whole working class into the Socialist camp—for which full allowance must be made in estimating the optimistic mentality of the pioneers.

Nor was Hyndman absolutely mistaken in holding confidently on to his path despite constant discouragement and setbacks. If the "hard winter" of early 1885, and the consequent distress among London's hundreds of thousands in the poor back streets, did not yet put him on to the path of an "unemployed" agitation,²

¹ Joseph Clayton's *Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain, 1884-1924*, pp. 22-4, prints the programme. In a preamble the object of the movement was declared to be: "The Socialisation of the Means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange to be controlled by a Democratic State in the interests of the entire community, and the complete Emancipation of Labour from the domination of Capitalism and Landlordism, with the establishment of Social and Economic Equality between the Sexes." Then followed the absolute Social Democratic programme under seven heads and lastly the programme of "palliatives" to be pressed upon the existing order until the advent of the Socialist State. The "advanced" nature even of the "palliative" programme may be judged by setting down two or three characteristic provisions: "No child to be employed in any trade or occupation until 16 years of age, and heavy penalties to be inflicted on employers infringing this law.

"Eight hours or less to be the normal working day or not more than forty-eight hours per week. . . .

"State Appropriation of Railways; Municipal Ownership and Control of Gas, Electric Light, and Water Supplies . . .

"Every person attaining the age of fifty to be kept by the community, work being optional after that age. . . ."

² Cf. R. H. Gretton, *A Modern History of the English People*, i, 153-4, for the limited extent of the S.D.F.'s exploitation of unemployment. A workman's

"Labour" and the Birth of British Socialism 1874-1886

it did provide the Social Democratic Federation with an uncommon opportunity of urging its case in respectable company and at nationally reported proceedings. That three S.D.F. speakers should have been allowed to put their arguments to a famous Industrial Remuneration Conference,¹ financed by the £1,000 of a philanthropist and attended by political figures as prominent as John Morley on the one side and A. J. Balfour on the other, certainly appeared to have advanced Socialism a stage forward in the realm of "practical politics."

The following summer, with its feverish preparations for what seemed likely to be a decisive General Election, apparently offered the S.D.F. an even better opportunity of attracting public attention. Workmen were asked to put the following questions to Parliamentary candidates:²

1. Are you in favour of Eight Hours being made by law the working day in all trades and businesses, all overtime being put an end to?
2. Are you in favour of free education in all Board Schools?
3. Are you in favour of at least one gratuitous meal being given to the children in all Board Schools?

deputation appeared at the local Government Board on February 16th, pressing for public works and the like. Afterwards, it began an indignation meeting in Downing Street which the police dispersed. The deputation was led by John Burns, J. E. Williams, William Henry, and James Macdonald of the S.D.F., and carried with it printed anti-Government manifestos over their signature, which were distributed to the crowd. It would seem therefore that the workmen-members of the S.D.F. already had a perception of the possible value of an "unemployed" agitation.

¹ The *Proceedings of the Industrial Remuneration Conference* make interesting reading. Burns, Williams, and Macdonald were the S.D.F. speakers.

² *Justice*, August 8, 1885. Actually this was not the most extreme of the 1885 Election Manifestos. Anarchism now had a small British following and the *Anarchist* had made its appearance as a 1d. monthly in March 1885. In due course it printed an Anarchist Manifesto from which the following extracts may be given because they suggest the first distrust of the whole democratic theory ever to be harboured in extreme working-class circles and used against the "Labour Representation" panacea: "No man can honestly and truly represent anyone but himself, and if he says he can, he is a humbug. . . . Directly a man finds himself a part of the government, he grows to care for nothing but to forward his own interests and his own views, and above everything to keep himself in power and the People in Subjection. . . ."

"Landlords and Capitalists have so much influence over both Elections and Parliament that they can always overawe or make tools of the *People's Members*. Government is the machine by which the *Rich* keep the *Poor* down. *Labour Representation is a Delusion*. It is merely the latest dodge for making the machine run smoothly. . . . If there were no Privileged Classes and no Monopoly of Property, there would be No Need for any Government at All. DO NOT VOTE." British Anarchism remained a considerable internal problem for Socialist parties for some time, as the Anarchist argument had a distinct appeal even for party-members.

4. Are you in favour of the organisation of unemployed Labour by the State or Municipalities?
5. Are you in favour of the enactment of a minimum wage in all Government departments and of the equal payment of men and women in these departments?
6. Are you in favour of the Railways being made National Property?
7. Are you in favour of the Nationalisation and Municipalisation of Land?
8. Are you in favour of Universal Adult Suffrage for Parliamentary, Municipal, and School Board Elections?
9. Are you in favour of payment of members and of all election expenses out of the rates?
10. Are you in favour of the Abolition of the House of Lords?

From the standpoint of the S.D.F.'s ultimate aims this was a relatively "moderate" programme, and Hyndman would have done well to practise the same moderation in other departments. But lured on by the "tendency to political opportunism,"¹ which had already caused him to alienate William Morris and the Socialist League, Hyndman was meditating an insufficiently prepared incursion into the electoral field with three S.D.F. workman candidates. Ultimately he committed the enormous tactical blunder of frankly accepting Tory financial aid for his candidates, though it was only offered in the hope of diverting sufficient votes from the "official" Gladstonians to ensure Tory victories. No doubt Hyndman hoped to astonish Tories as well as "Whigs" by his ability to use the proffered money to secure S.D.F. Members of Parliament. And probably his normal optimism was increased, as election time drew nearer, by the successes of the "Dod Street Affair"² and the great rally of the East End to help the Socialist defence of "free speech" against the police and a Tory Home Office. But Hyndman was totally under-rating the difficulty of launching his candidates in constituencies where they were completely unknown. When the average voter, with his

¹ Tom Mann's *Memoirs*, p. 45 sqq., give the resignation declaration of the Morris group. It shows that from the first Hyndman's readiness to turn to Tories, even though it were for S.D.F. ends, had been disliked.

² The corner of Dod Street and Burdett Road, Limehouse, was a traditional Sunday speaking-pitch, much used of late by Socialists. The police had given notice that the meetings must stop and, because there was practically no traffic that it could be claimed the Socialists were obstructing, they in their turn announced that they could legally continue without breaking the law. After a considerable affray one Sunday morning and eight arrests, the issue caused sufficient excitement in the East End for the East London United Radical Club to organise a monster procession next Sunday which occupied the speaking-pitch in force and re-established the "right of free speech."

"Labour" and the Birth of British Socialism, 1874-1886

normal dislike of "late" and minority candidatures, heard also the whisper of their being financed by "Tory Gold" the result was disastrous.¹

It was fortunate for the further prospects of the S.D.F. that, in the vast tumult and shouting of an extremely hotly contested election, the "public" and the newspapers almost completely missed the crushing electoral defeat that had overtaken what might be called Revolutionary Socialism.² The Tories, in fact, had so loudly charged all the "advanced" candidates with "Socialism" that the uninstructed man in the street had every reason for considering that the election results really showed that "Socialism" had made considerable progress. Accordingly when the year 1886 opened with marked distress phenomena among London's tens of thousands of unemployed, the Social Democratic Federation was under no obvious handicap in attempting to secure the unemployed's allegiance.

Other organisations, too, were in the field for the same purpose, and actually the enormous Trafalgar Square meeting of Monday afternoon, February 8th, whose rioting was to make such a sensation, had been convoked first by an ephemeral Labourers' Union with a programme of public works for the unemployed.³ A Fair Trade League, financed by Protectionist Tories, next entered the fray and seems to have spent a considerable sum organising a procession from the East End to Trafalgar Square where it also proposed to hold a meeting on the afternoon of February 8th.⁴ Lastly the S.D.F., scenting the "occasion" for which it had been sighing since its "Dod Street" triumphs, called a third meeting at the same time and place. The mob of 15,000 to 20,000, which finally crowded Trafalgar Square and all its

¹ John Burns's 598 votes in West Nottingham, of course, less so than J. E. Williams's 27 in Hampstead and Fielding's 32 in Kennington.

² In virtually all the reports (cf. *Whitaker's Almanack*, 1886) Burns, Williams, and Fielding merely appear with the *L* for Liberal after their names, so that the "man in the street," scanning election results, would have accepted them as unofficial Liberals.

³ *Illustrated London News*, February 13th. Its long and lavishly illustrated account of the riots cannot be fully trusted.

⁴ W. J. Davis, *History of the British T.U.C.*, pp. 86-8, seems to show that some of the working-men speakers of this League had been expelled from the T.U.C. of 1881 as representing not a *bona-fide* working-class movement, but one financed by sugar refineries anxious to obtain Protection from the alleged effects of the bounty-supported sugar-dumping of foreign sugar-refiners. In regard to their activities of 1886, Bradlaugh offered to bring forward beershop keepers who would testify to Fair Trade demonstrators having spent with them the money subscribed by Protectionist members of both Houses.

approaches at the appointed time, showed but the scantiest respect for the combination of "public works" and Protectionist resolutions which came to be offered it by an amalgamation of the Labourers' Union and Fair Trade platforms. To John Burns, however, who opened for the S.D.F. in hotly spiced style and with a stentorian voice, it accorded a very different reception, and success also attended the violent speeches from Champion, Williams, and Hyndman which followed. It was apparently a police suggestion to Hyndman that next caused the word to go round for a march to Hyde Park, and it was some jeering from Clubland's windows *en route* and, perhaps, some insulting missiles from Clubland's menials¹ that precipitated the window smashing and general violence that so astonishingly followed.

The short panic that ensued among the more timorous of the well-to-do,² a panic marked at once by a cry for the condign punishment of "sneaking"³ agitators and by more generous donations towards Relief Funds⁴ and Soup Kitchens, seemed almost as startling a revelation of the precariousness of the existing balance of social forces as the Riots themselves. It was not for nothing that after the Riots had almost straightway produced from the Local Government Board a relaxation of outdoor relief restrictions and from the upper classes, led by the Queen and the Prince of Wales, a flood of subscriptions to a hitherto neglected Mansion House Relief Fund,⁵ Dockland humorists should have been chalking

¹ Cf. Elton's *England Arise!*, p. 127, for the "rioters'" belief that Club servants in Pall Mall had thrown old shoes and brushes.

² Cf. *Illustrated London News*, February 13th. "On Tuesday and Wednesday, fears of a renewed outbreak were entertained, and many shopkeepers at the West End and in the Strand put up their shutters in the afternoon. Trafalgar Square was guarded by a large force of police."

³ Cf. the *Punch* cartoon, "Sneaking Sedition." The epithet was apparently applied because the S.D.F. leaders who had not rioted could not be proceeded against quite so simply as those of the "mob" who had fallen into police hands.

⁴ Cf. *Illustrated London News*, February 20th, for the mounting of a Mansion House Relief Fund within eight days from negligible proportions to the £42,000 to which it had been taken by the afternoon of February 16th. When the word went round again in the early spring the funds were almost at an end, fresh efforts were made so that by April 7th the total subscriptions to date were given as £77,910 (*Whitaker's Almanack*, 1887, p. 332).

⁵ It is worth noting that a Mansion House Committee had been appointed and had reported to the Lord Mayor in December 1885 deprecating a special appeal. The *Report of the Mansion House Committee* (p. 13), though making some praiseworthy long-range suggestions, was blind enough to the immediate present to conclude that "spasmodic assistance given by the public in answer to special appeals for what are considered signal cases of depression, is really useless in ameliorating the condition of the classes to whom it is rendered. More often than not the worthless and importunate receive the money sent into the

"Labour" and the Birth of British Socialism 1874-1886

up on the walls such notices as "Wanted, Wanted, Wanted, Rioters, Rioters, 100,000 Rioters Wanted for the West End to break and smash all the windows."¹ As the S.D.F. was preparing to improve the shining hour by a great mass meeting in Hyde Park on Sunday, February 21st, it becomes plainer why the police resolved on a somewhat hazardous sedition prosecution of the four S.D.F. orators of February 8th and arranged to hold the Park on the 21st as though threatened by a foreign enemy. The police, too, under the orders of a Chief Commissioner, aware that his retirement was in question in consequence of the police failure of February 8th, were far from gentle, and had the great processions arriving from all over London² been less good-humoured there might easily have been a renewal of serious trouble.

Just as the police resolve to prosecute the S.D.F. speakers for sedition had mightily contributed to the great rally of February 21st, so their undaunted bearing in the dock,³ and their final acquittal on April 10th, contributed to make them the heroes of the discontented and the obvious rallying-point for "distress" demonstrations in the ensuing winter. Pending the arrival at this winter distress the propaganda work both of the S.D.F. and the Socialist League was indefatigable, and every now and then it provided the inevitable street incident with the police most likely to rally working-class sympathy for the Socialist defenders of

East End at such times, while the worthy and retiring are left unaided. The very publicity of the appeals raises claimants for a'lms."

¹ *Illustrated London News*, February 20th, representing a Dockland scene.

² *Justice*, February 27th, summarising Press accounts of the meeting said that the "Capitalist Press" estimated the meeting to have numbered between 50,000 and 75,000 while those more favourably disposed put the numbers at between 100,000 and 120,000. The *Daily Telegraph* of February 22nd devoted five columns to the occasion, and the *Illustrated London News* of February 27th was most impressed by the contingents from every part of London.

³ J. Clayton, *Rise and Decline of Socialism*, etc., pp. 27-8, quotes this resounding passage from John Burns's defence: "There is a class of men who make it a practice, on occasions of political demonstrations, to laugh and jeer, from their club windows, at the poverty of what they term 'the great unwashed,' to jeer at the misery their own greed has created. . . . The crowd were not in a temper to stand even mere laughing, and they were not disposed to (answer) contemptuous jeers by a smile. And what was the result? Stone-throwing commenced—the result of the stupid, ungentelemanly, criminal conduct of the Carlton Club members. I did my best to repress the stone-throwing, instead of inciting the crowd, believing, as I do, that window-breaking, except perhaps as a warning, is useless to effect a change in our system of society based as it is upon the robbery of labour. . . . At the Thatched House Club the contemptuous jeering was renewed. . . ."

"Free Speech" at the traditional speaking-pitches.¹ When October came, the S.D.F. sprang its first surprise on the apprehensive "public."² A Lord Mayor's Procession was being prepared for November 9th, calculated to remind the "public" of the Imperial grandeurs of the British Empire, and the Federation announced that it would advise the unemployed to form their own procession behind that of the Lord Mayor in order that the "public" might also learn of the starvation and misery rampant in the Empire's very heart. For a number of weeks there was the greatest fear of a bloody affray. And even after the mobilisation of 8,000 foot and 300 mounted police, with ample troop support in the rear, to enforce the Police Commissioner's view of the illegality of the proposed S.D.F. demonstration;³ even after the S.D.F. had itself countermanded the unemployed procession and substituted a mass meeting in Trafalgar Square, there was marked nervousness in the West End and great barricading of shops.⁴ Thus resoundingly opened the S.D.F.'s winter activities of 1886-7, and they were continued with spirit and ingenuity for several months.⁵

All this activity was fated to have a number of most important consequences. Among the least obvious, perhaps, to the casual inquirer was the opening of Charles Booth's famous and authoritative investigation into the "Labour and Life of the People" which was to permit the issue in 1889 of a remarkable Volume I on East London that proved almost photographically⁶ how misleading had been the general tendency of anti-Socialist soporifics even of the Giffen class. Again, the relative success of the S.D.F.'s bold tactics had aroused a great deal of interest even inside the existing trade unions of the "aristocracy of labour" and much more, of course, in the poorer unorganised trades outside. Some "Labour leaders," fearful of the antagonisation of "public opinion,"

¹ Cf. Mackail's *Life of Morris*, ii, 158-61.

² *Justice*, October 9th, contains the first opening of the affair. By October 23rd even the scornful *Illustrated London News* was reporting the exchanges going on between the S.D.F. and the City Police.

³ *Illustrated London News*, November 13th, which reports the bringing of the Life Guards from Windsor and other troops from Aldershot. Soldiers were later employed to help the police when these had decided that the Trafalgar Square crowds had grown noisy enough, after the Socialist speeches, to justify their forcible dispersal.

⁴ *Ibid.*
⁵ Trafalgar Square meetings were varied by such things as "simultaneous demonstrations" outside Poor Law premises on New Year's Day, and the mass march on St. Paul's Cathedral of Sunday, February 27th.

⁶ Booth's *East London*, pp. 7-24, for some remarkable street-censuses.

“Labour” and the Birth of British Socialism 1874-1886

might have ventured to condemn the S.D.F. methods,¹ but this had only exposed them to the crushing Socialist retort that they themselves were the worst drags on working-class advance.² It certainly indicates Socialist progress to find the T.U.C. of 1886 resolving to collaborate with the Continental Socialists³ on a remarkable programme for the international protection of labour; and still more to find the great minuteness with which such an old-established Union as the Ironworkers allowed the resultant International Congress to be reported in its monthly *Journals*.⁴ Matters were obviously preparing for the first formal challenge to the domination of the non-Socialist “Front Bench” which came from Keir Hardie at the T.U.C. of 1887.⁵ And though Keir

¹ Two days after the riots of February 8, 1886, the Amalgamated Society of Engineers thought fit to disclaim John Burns and his, or any other, politics (*Elton's England Arise!*, p. 133).

² Hyndman is reported by Mann (*Memoirs*, p. 57) as follows: “What were these precious unions? By whom were they led? By the most stodgy-brained, dull-witted, and slow-going time-servers in the country. To place reliance upon these, or to go out of our way to conciliate them, would be entirely wrong, and the same applied to the co-operative movement.”

³ Davis, *History of the British T.U.C.*, p. 125, mentions the passing of the “international” resolution in Congress as most significant. It had apparently taken the “Front Bench” off their guard though they successfully avoided anything practical resulting.

⁴ Cf. *Ironworkers' Journal*, March 1887. The proposal before the Congress was the pressure upon all Governments simultaneously of the following programme: (1) Interdiction of work by children under 14 years of age. (2) Special measures for the protection of children above 14 and of women. (3) The duration of the day's work to be fixed at 8 hours, with one day's rest per week. (4) Suppression of night-work excepting under certain circumstances to be specified. (5) Obligatory adoption of measures of hygiene in workshops, mines, factories, etc., and so to (10) A minimum rate of wages to be established which will enable workmen to live decently and rear their families. The Ironworkers were given not only the debates on these topics, but also notes on the differences that existed among the Socialists themselves between pure Marxists and Possibilists who felt that adaptations of Socialist strategy should not be forbidden in view of the different temperaments and circumstances, say, of the French and German nations. The cautious “Front Bench” delegates from Britain, too, were not allowed to emerge too favourably from the Report, seeing that the Chairman's vigorous remonstrance to their plea of not being able to vote in default of instructions was given fully. “We had expected something better than that at the hands of the English trade unions,” he said. “They have failed to understand that by voting with us they would have given great moral strength to our moderate demands. . . . In two Congresses, in 1886 as in 1883, the English trade unionists have hung back. . . . Surely the English must acknowledge that it is indispensable to generalise the measures which, in their own country, have been of so much use. . . . Their own interests demand such “international legislation if they do not wish to be the victims of a disloyal competition.”

⁵ W. J. Davis, *History of the British T.U.C.*, pp. 129-30. Keir Hardie divided against the Parliamentary Committee in the attempt to commit the T.U.C. to an eight-hour day in the mines. He divided also against a complacent “Front Bench” refusal of “State assistance” on the ground that “Trade Union effort, well organised and directed, would become powerful enough to protect the workers.”

Hardie was out-voted at his first attempt, the pioneer of the "new unions" which were before long to assure his triumph had already been founded. In July 1887 Ben Tillett had been made Secretary of the newly launched Tea Coopers and General Labourers' Association from whose activities grew the epoch-making Dock Strike of 1889.¹

¹ B. Tillett, *Reflections and Reminiscences*, p. 94 sqq.

Note: Two Counsels given to Christians facing the "Social Problem"

"Let the clergyman only apply—with impartial and level sweep—to his congregation the great pastoral order: 'The man that will not work, neither should he eat;' . . . and he will find an entirely new view of life and its sacraments open upon him. . . .

"For the man who is not—day by day—doing work which will earn his dinner, must be stealing his dinner; and the actual fact is, that the great mass of men calling themselves Christians do actually live by robbing the poor of their bread, and by no other trade whatsoever; and the simple examination of the mode of the produce and consumption of European food—who digs for it, and who eats it—will prove that to any honest human soul."

From Ruskin's *Letters to the Clergy* (Letter, August 19, 1879)

"You ought to Help us, if you can. Will you?"

" . . . all the way through my career I have keenly felt the remedial measures usually enunciated in Christian programmes and ordinarily employed by Christian philanthropy to be lamentably inadequate for any effectual dealing with the deepening misery of these outcast classes. The rescued are appallingly few. . . . There is nothing in my scheme which will bring it into collision either with Socialists of the State or Socialists of the Municipality, with Individualists or Nationalists, or any of the schools of thought in the great field of social economics—excepting only those anti-Christian economists who hold that it is an offence against the doctrine of the survival of the fittest to try to save the weakest from going to the wall. . . ."

General Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890)
"socialises" the Salvation Army's appeal.

RADICALS AND THE COLONIES, 1853-86

"To propose that Great Britain should voluntarily give up all authority over her colonies . . . would be to propose such a measure as never was, and never will be, adopted by any nation in the world. . . . Such sacrifices, though they might frequently be agreeable to the interest, are always mortifying to the pride of every nation; and, what is perhaps of still greater consequence, they are always contrary to the private interest of the governing part of it. . . . The most visionary enthusiasts would scarcely be capable of proposing such a measure, with any serious hopes of its ever being adopted. If it was adopted, however, Great Britain would not only immediately be freed from the whole annual expense of the peace establishment of the colonies, but might settle with them such a treaty of commerce as would effectually secure to her a free trade. . . . By thus parting good friends, the natural affection of the colonies to the Mother Country . . . might dispose them, not only to respect, for whole centuries together, that treaty of commerce . . . but to favour us in war as well as in trade. . . ."

A famous passage from ADAM SMITH'S "Wealth of Nations," which was often quoted by nineteenth-century Radicals.

"In the case of New Zealand, as of other dependencies, that which is officially styled the 'Empire' is patronage to a few, but to the nation expense, weakness, humiliation; while to the Colony it is a protection which cannot last for ever, and so long as it lasts, stifles self-dependence. . . .

"With danger lowering on our own shores, with the war income-tax almost hopelessly fixed upon us, with France mistress of the destinies of Europe and trampling international rights under her feet, with the defence of the Canadian frontier on our hands—with a cotton famine to cripple our resources as well as to afflict our people, we are keeping an army of 5,000 or 6,000 men . . . to carry on a war against a horde of naked savages in New Zealand.

"There are in New Zealand 100,000 Europeans and 50,000 natives. But of the natives only 11,000 are hostile. These 11,000 send out at most 3,000 fighting men. . . ."

GOLDWIN SMITH'S "The Empire" (pp. 147-9) protests against the Colonies expecting security "without lifting a hand in their own defence" (1862-3).

"Our hands are to the plough and we cannot turn back. If we do, woe betide the hapless Fellaheen. Chaos would return.

The finances would be fastened on by harpies, the taxes would be enforced by the curbash, justice would be bought and sold, the group of slothful and mendacious pashas and unprincipled and greedy usurers who constitute the entourage of the Khedive would revel in their regained liberty to rob and ravage. We voluntarily undertook the task, and duty, interest, and humanity require us to stick to it. Cairo, too, is on the way to the Cape. Along it we will find sales for our goods, fields for our enterprise, scope for our philanthropy. There are roads to make, markets to open, lands to till, and slaves to emancipate. No grander outlet offers for colonising genius. . . ."

A Radical M.P. goes Imperialist, December 22, 1883. (From J. S. COWEN'S "Speeches," pp. 150-1.)

THE average Englishman of 1852 and even the average Conservative could hardly be said to have regarded the large number of small white communities scattered about the world under the Union Jack with any swelling Imperial pride. Thanks largely to persistent Radical criticism, the "man in the street" when thinking of colonies was apt to think rather of the expense, jobbery, and dangers attending their control than of the "glory" they bestowed upon the Mother Country of an Empire "upon which the sun never sets." New Zealand's constant call for thousands of regulars to watch and cow the discontented Maoris; the never-ending problem and expense of the Cape's Kaffir frontier and of the disaffected Dutch Boers who had trekked out of the colony altogether; West India planterdom's unceasing demand for the restoration of its monopoly to force dear sugar upon the home consumer; Australia's dubious origins and uncertain future—but, above all, the grave perils and scanty advantages attendant upon the nominal retention of the British North American colonies caused serious and justifiable anxiety. Was it not actually of the British North American situation that Disraeli as Tory Leader of the Commons wrote to his colleague, the Foreign Secretary, on August 13, 1852: "These wretched colonies will all be independent too in a few years and are a millstone round our necks"¹ That the trumpety attempts of the fishermen of Canada, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland to exclude

¹ Malmesbury's *Memoirs of an Ex-Minister* (ed. 1885), pp. 260-1.

Radicals and the Colonies 1853-1886

United States fishermen from fishing-grounds which these had certainly been permitted to enter under clauses of the Independence Treaty of 1783,¹ should repeatedly bring the people of Great Britain within measurable distance of a great and ruinous war might well have called out an even louder lamentation.

No short passage, perhaps, will give a better idea of the vast differences between the Empire sentiment of the 50's and that of to-day than a quotation from a famous Parliamentary speech on the Colonies made by Molesworth, the Radical Baronet and Colonial authority, on April 10, 1851. Molesworth, unlike most of his brother Radicals, did not regard the gradual drifting away of the self-governing colonies into independence as inevitable or desirable, and could not accept the common Radical view that England would gain from Colonial independence. He refused to believe that trade and emigration opportunities would be the same after independence as before or that all that independence involved was a welcome end to British concern with colonial discontents, costly native wars, and the dangerous envy of foreign Powers. Yet Molesworth's Imperialism was of the disconcertingly robust kind which accompanied admission of the colonists' claims to complete self-government with the requirement that they should undertake their own defence at their own cost instead of relying upon the British taxpayer and the Army and Navy he provided. Concluding his famous speech of April 10, 1851,² Molesworth took up the most Radical of stands:

I have attempted to prove that no troops ought to be maintained at our expense in any one of these colonies, after it has obtained free institutions, except for strictly imperial purposes; and that it is not just to call upon the people of this country to defray out of their taxes any portion of the expense of the troops required for local purposes . . . in every colony there are many persons who have a strong sinister interest in the amount of Imperial expenditure. These persons have made, or expect to make, large gains by contracts, jobs, and by the innumerable other modes of robbing the mother country. They rejoice in every increase of imperial expenditure. To them a Kafir or a Maori

¹ The colonial lawyers expected the British fleet to back their argument that these clauses had been *ipso facto* cancelled by the outbreak of war between the United States and the Empire in 1812.

² Extensively printed in pamphlet form as *Speech of Sir William Molesworth Bart, M.P., in the House of Commons on the 10th of April, 1851, for a Reduction of the Colonial Expenditure*. It was quoted long afterwards and had its importance even when the Gladstone Government of 1868-74 prepared to force the issue by withdrawing British troops from the Colonies for Home Defence.

war or a rebellion is a Godsend. I have heard on good authority that in the Canadian rebellion the enormous gains of these persons were equal to the losses of the rest of the community and that they have been heard to toast the good old times of that rebellion, and the speedy commencement of the next. Sir H. Smith has stated in one of his despatches that during the last Kafir war many persons amassed large sums of money; and that the consequences were a redundancy of money at the Cape . . . with general prosperity, and a tendency to over-speculation. I have heard similar statements with regard to New Zealand. And it is self-evident that, with an imperial expenditure many times greater than the local revenues of a colony, there must be a fine harvest for the jobbing and speculating tribe. . . . Many of these unworthy Anglo-Saxons would, in their hearts, prefer Colonial Office despotism with huge imperial expenditure to the freest institutions with imperial economy. We are to blame for this degeneracy, which every high-minded and every right-minded colonial deplures.

If this be taken as the prevailing Imperial tone in the 50's, such apparent miracles as the Sand River Convention of 1852 with the Transvaal Boers and the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854 with the Boers of the Orange River become more explicable. Once they had been headed away from the Natal sea coast in 1842 and forced into the dim interior, the "disaffected" Boers who had trekked from the Cape in 1836 became harder to subject. In 1848, indeed, the British High Commissioner had annexed their territory between the Orange and the Vaal, fought down their "insurrection," and seen the "most violent opponents of British authority" undertake yet another trek northwards across the Vaal.¹ But the great expenses of the Kaffir War, which opened in December 1850 and raged until 1853, forced the Colonial Office to meditate a change of policy. Conscious of the keen Radical scrutiny of the accounts, not unaware of how desperately unjustifiable the financial and military position might become from a House of Commons viewpoint if there were more trouble with the Boers, the Colonial Office undertook to recognise the independence of the Transvaal Boers in 1852. And once the bold step had been taken of disclaiming sovereignty over a population and a territory which could yield apparently nothing of profit but only an infinity of trouble and expense, the appetite grew for more. In 1854 the Colonial Office recognised the independence of the Orange River Boers despite the protests of small British and Dutch minorities in the area affected.²

¹ Cf. Theal's *History of the Boers*, pp. 245-65.

² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 346-60.

Radicals and the Colonies 1853-1886

It was in 1862 and 1863 that that remarkable academic Radical, Goldwin Smith, Professor of History at Oxford, was able, thanks to the hospitality of the columns of the "advanced Liberal" *Daily News*,¹ to force on discussions on the fundamental constitution of the Empire which probed even deeper than had those of the "Colonial Reform" agitation of 1848-52. Unhampered by the electoral considerations bound to affect even the boldest Parliamentarian, Goldwin Smith was able to make remarkable play with the facts and figures lately elicited by a Parliamentary Committee on Military Defences in the Colonies. Here is his treatment of the problem of Canadian defence even before the Canadian Parliament had recklessly rejected a Militia Bill which might have eased the strain on British military resources at a time when Napoleon III's European projects² were causing grave anxiety:³

The weight of Canada alone, if we persist in undertaking her defence, is almost enough to drag us down from our high place among European nations. We have an army now in that country of 18,000 men at a cost of not much less than two millions. Large and costly as this force is, it is quite incapable of defending an open frontier of 1,500 miles, and it must be greatly increased in case war should become imminent. The whole force required must be kept always on the spot, since reinforcements cannot be thrown in during a great part of the year. It must be recruited from a nation where soldiers are becoming dearer: supplied from a great distance with all munitions of war: and held together in a country offering high wages to labourers and therefore great temptations to desertion. Besides the land force, a great fleet must be kept always on the station. Not only so, but flotillas must be maintained on the chain of frontier lakes. . . . Reason tells us, and experience—long, costly, and decisive experience—proves that so long as the Mother Country undertakes the defence of the Colonies, the Colonies will not be at the pains and expense of defending themselves. . . .

On the question of New Zealand defence Goldwin Smith was even more caustic. And certainly there seemed more than a superficial case against allowing 6,000 troops and a warship to be kept in New Zealand watching 11,000 disaffected Maoris when

¹ His communications were republished in book form in 1863 as *The Empire, A Series of Letters published in the Daily News*. He had been moved to begin the series by the narrow escape England had had in the winter of 1861-2 from having to attempt to defend Canada from American invasion on the occasion of the "Trent" dispute.

² Cf. Goldwin Smith's *The Empire*, p. 2: "To protect dependent colonies we not only burden our overtaxed people with gratuitous taxation, but scatter our forces, naval as well as military, over the globe, leaving the heart of England open to a sudden blow. . . ."

³ *Ibid.*, p. 78, for this passage.

the white community numbered 100,000 against a Maori grand total of 55,000.¹ Independence, urged Goldwin Smith, was the only solution. So long as colonial populations felt that they could enlist the British Army and Navy in their disputes without assuming a pennyworth of financial responsibility, so long would there be endless "incidents" with Maoris, Kaffirs, and Australian blacks, not to mention Canadian "picnic parties over the American frontier to sing Dixie in the face of an agonised and frenzied nation."² To throw these "young communities, full of hot blood and ignorant of disaster," upon their own resources would be more than an act of common honesty to the heavily laden British taxpayer whom they invariably declined to relieve—always, of course, for allegedly excellent reasons.³ It would teach them the prudence of abstaining from "acts of insolence and violence" such as bred costly and dangerous wars.⁴ Moreover, once the financial and economic relations between the self-governing Colonies and the Mother Country had been fairly adjusted by the recognition of Colonial Independence—and Canada had already insisted on effecting a one-sided adjustment by imposing very considerable tariffs on British imports—there could begin to grow up a moral and spiritual *entente* based on a common heritage and more valuable because more fundamental than the false glitter of Imperial "prestige."⁵

¹ Cf. Goldwin Smith's *The Empire*, p. 148: "These 11,000 send out at most 3,000 fighting men, and to keep down these 3,000 men we are employing 6,000 regular British soldiers. . . ."

² Goldwin Smith's *The Empire*, p. 81. The reference is to some foolish provocation offered by private Canadians to the North during the American Civil War. Most Canadians hoped that the South would achieve independence and split their mighty neighbour into two.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 149. "The Colonists, of course, would not be unwilling in the abstract to contribute something towards the army kept for their protection: but unluckily they cannot do it without imposing additional taxation on themselves." This is a sarcastic comment on New Zealand's excuses to the Colonial Secretary of 1862, the Duke of Newcastle, who had asked for a financial contribution.

⁴ Cf. also Robert Lowe's evidence to the Committee on Colonial Military Expenditure, May 27, 1861. He held that the colonies "ought not to be able to take things with so high a hand," and that it were better if they learned "that there are many things which they must endure, and that it is better to put up with a great deal of injury than rush immediately to arms."

⁵ Goldwin Smith's *The Empire*, Introduction, p. viii: "The reasons or alleged reasons for retaining the dependencies are of the most various kinds. In some cases they are political, in some military, in some commercial, in some diplomatic. Frequently these various reasons are blended together. . . . The pride of Empire, however, runs through the whole, and so does the notion that extent of territory is the extent of power."

Radicals and the Colonies 1853-1886

All these "advanced" Radical heresies brought, of course, upon Goldwin Smith grave censure from *The Times* and complete repudiation from such a Prime Minister as Palmerston. But when the Canadian Parliament chose to reject a Militia Bill under which some modest Canadian help would have been forthcoming for the British troops defending Canada, hot opinions on Colonial selfishness and irresponsibility were expressed not merely by *The Times* but by unimpeachably orthodox Tory Parliamentarians.¹ In fact, the situation was such that yet a third act of Imperial abdication was undertaken not unlike those in South Africa during the 50's. The Ionian Islands, whose rule had brought only trouble and expense² and whose population was growing increasingly restless for union with Greece, were allowed, with some safeguards, to pass from British control. Moreover, partly at least as a result of the broadest British hints,³ the North American Colonies were brought in 1864 to begin the consideration of such a Confederation as should in normal times be capable of relieving the Mother Country of part if not of all its military responsibilities in North America. One day even Canadians may come to allow Goldwin Smith his due share of credit for the Confederation Act of 1867.

The Colonial issue, however, which raised a more unanimous and violent Radical outcry than any other in the 60's was the notorious conduct of Governor Eyre of Jamaica in October 1865 when he used all the dread rigours of martial law for the suppression of alleged "dangerous disturbances" among the coloured population of the island. Despite Emancipation the Jamaican planter-class had retained not only the ownership of the great bulk of the valuable land, but also the taxing and law-making

¹ Notably the Rt. Hon. C. B. Adderley, M.P., whose pamphlet, coming as it did from a reputed friend of the Colonies, earned the rebuke of the counter-pamphlet, *A Letter to the Rt. Hon. C. B. Adderley, M.P., by the Hon. Joseph Howe, Premier of Nova Scotia*, 1863.

² Cf. Goldwin Smith's *Empire*, p. 246. "The cost of the islands for the five years 1853-7 was £1,128,000. . . . This, of course, is besides their share in the expense of the Mediterranean fleet . . . and for this outlay we have received not one farthing of return in any shape whatever. . . . All this dawned on the keen eye of diplomacy since the choice of the Greeks fell on an English prince. . . ."

³ For their determined continuation for years cf. such a pamphlet as Henry Thring's *Suggestions for Colonial Reform* (1865), p. 6: "On one side of a borderline some 2,000 miles in length, more than two millions of men are in arms: on the other side there is quietly marrying and giving in marriage, trading, smuggling, and otherwise amusing itself, the largest, freest, and most adult colony of England. . . ."

powers of the House of Assembly and local judicial and administrative powers of a formidable kind. It is quite plain that all these sources of influence had been unremittingly, if not very successfully, used by the planter-element in the effort to keep a large part of Jamaica's population still tied to the plantations and incapable of freeing itself from the necessity for at least some plantation labour.¹ There had naturally been growing discontent which had finally come to a head on October 7, 1865, when a number of negroes, alleged to have been armed with sticks, grew so riotous during a prosecution in Morant Bay Court House that it was thought fit to issue twenty-eight warrants. The imprudent attempt to execute these warrants led to graver trouble still, until on October 11th Morant Bay Court House was fired and the excited negro mob passed on to attack the whites.²

All England was soon to learn how Governor Eyre had thereupon transported troops, declared martial law, and permitted hangings, floggings, and houseburnings to continue long after all apparent justification had ended. Nothing, however, aroused stronger feeling than the way in which the Governor had assumed direct personal responsibility for the hanging of a coloured member of the Assembly on lamentably insufficient evidence of his "being the chief cause and origin of the whole rebellion." Governor Eyre's own rather wild language in accusing not only the man whom he had executed but also "the black people of the Baptist persuasion connected with him, political demagogues and agitators, a few Baptist missionaries and a portion of the Press"³ was of a nature to arouse instant suspicion even from the Colonial Office. By the time the further explanations demanded from him had arrived and been found equally unsatisfactory, the most

¹ *The West India Labour Question* pamphlet (1858) of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society contains full, if somewhat biased, accounts of the position. It had been evoked by a series of articles in *The Times* ascribing the "ruin" of West Indian plantations to the laziness of the free negroes and by the almost contemporaneous passage through the Jamaica Assembly of a law, disallowed at Westminster, for bringing cheap coolie labour to the island from India. With this labour, tied to the plantations at 10s. per month, plantation managers had been hopeful of forcing down "unreasonable" negro demands in regard to working conditions and pay.

² Cf. *Annals of Our Time* under October 7th. Eighteen white men were killed in the resulting disturbances and thirty-two wounded. But for every white killed more than twenty blacks were executed; and for every white wounded nearly twenty blacks were flogged. A thousand native houses were burned down.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, where is reported the execution of the 23rd and the Governor's almost incredible despatch thereupon.

horrifying details of what had been done by the military under the martial law powers conferred by Governor Eyre¹ had reached the country. It hardly needed the anti-Eyre campaign of the *Radical Morning Star* and the Exeter Hall indignation meeting, dominated by chapel Radicals, to produce the Government resolve of December 11th to suspend Eyre and to send out a Commission of Inquiry. Before the Commission reported, the Government had further accepted the necessity of abolishing the old planter-dominated Jamaican Constitution. And when the Commission's report was issued Eyre was definitely superseded and never employed again.

There followed the long and pertinacious attempts of the Jamaica Committee, led by J. S. Mill, M.P., to bring Governor Eyre and his military henchmen to justice. These attempts eventually failed against a multitude of obstacles, but Mill and his Radical coadjutors were satisfied that they had been fruitful of future good. "An emphatic warning," he held, had been given "to those who might be tempted to similar guilt hereafter that, though they might escape the actual sentence of a criminal tribunal, they were not safe against being put to some trouble and expense in order to avoid it. Colonial governors and other persons in authority will have a considerable motive to stop short of such extremities in future."² Events have more than justified Mill.

Before the last echoes of the Eyre controversy had died down, a Gladstone Government had taken office in December 1868 with a wing of "advanced" supporters intent on reopening some of the embarrassing Colonial questions raised so resoundingly a few years before by Goldwin Smith. Here, for example, are quotations from the literature of the Financial Reform Union,³ a Union

¹ Cf. *Annals of Our Times*, under October 25th, for astonishing military despatch material. Here, for example, is Lieutenant Adcock reporting on his pursuit and punishment of "rebel blacks": "On returning to Golden Grove in the evening, sixty-seven prisoners had been sent in. . . . I disposed of as many as possible, but was too tired to continue after dark. On the morning of the 24th I started for Morant Bay, having first flogged four and hung six rebels. I beg to state that I did not meet a single man upon the road up to Keith Hall; there were a few prisoners here, all of whom I flogged, and then proceeded to John's-town and Beckford. At the latter place I burned seven houses and one meeting house, etc. . . ."

² Mill's *Autobiography*, ed. 1908, p. 171.

³ This, one of the final propagandist efforts of the old City Radicalism, was intended to agitate the same order of questions as occupied the older Liverpool *Financial Reform Association* founded in 1848. "Reduction of the National Expenditure" figured first on its programme, a reduction to be won partly in the Colonial field, and the "free breakfast table" was to be made possible from the money saved.

launched in 1868 by such "advanced" politicians as Alderman Lush, M.P., and ex-Sheriff McArthur, M.P.:

A Parliamentary Return (No. 62, Session 1868) shows that fifty thousand soldiers are maintained by the British Government in our various colonies, at a cost of £3,338,023 . . . from a Parliamentary paper (No. 167, Session 168) we learn that the number of ships on colonial stations in 1867 was 125, having a complement of 19,353 men or nearly one-half of our entire naval forces. . . . It is clear that on a very moderate computation, at least six millions sterling, or more than one half of the customs duties proposed (by the Financial Reform Union) for repeal, are imposed for colonial purposes. . . .

The principal colonies of Great Britain are now perfectly independent: no control is exercised over their governments . . . they make their own laws, enact their own customs tariffs, in many instances protecting themselves against the introduction of British manufactures. In short, they perform every function of independent states excepting that of providing for their own defence. This they leave in the hands of the heavily taxed people of Great Britain. . . . Our dependencies tax us twice over, first by levying duties on our manufactures, and then by draining us of men and money for their military and naval defence. . . .

There is one advantage of Colonial possessions not hitherto alluded to, which is no doubt a potent reason in their favour in the minds of that section of the community which seeks to serve the public officially. They throw a large amount of patronage into the hands of the Government. A return of the present Session (No. 575) shows that 48 Governors and Lieutenant-Governors and 42 Bishops are appointed. . . . In addition there are subordinate officials innumerable. . . .¹

It was thanks to pressure of this kind that Lord Granville, Gladstone's first Colonial Secretary, was able successfully to insist not only on notifying the Canadian Confederation that there could be no indefinite retention there of a large British force, but also on persisting with the removal of all British troops from New Zealand.² If the first resolve, moreover, did good in helping

¹ These quotations are from the Financial Reform Union's Pamphlet, No. 4, entitled: *Colonial Expenditure, Tariffs and Trade*.

² Cf. Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, ii, 21-4, for the Conservative hubbub raised in consequence. Granville was prepared to admit in private that the best solution of the North American question "would probably be that in the course of time and in the most friendly spirit the Dominion should find itself strong enough to proclaim her independence" (letter to Earl Russell, August 28, 1869). In his famous *Greater Britain*, too, already in its fifth edition by 1870, Dilke on the score of his travels of 1866 and 1867 had also been urging an independent Republic of Canada as the best solution of Anglo-American and Canadian-American tension. "In all history," said this Radical forerunner of the English-speaking Union, "there is nothing stranger than the narrowness of mind that has led us to see in Canada a piece of England, and in America a hostile country. . . ."

Radicals and the Colonies 1853-1886

to expedite the adoption of a real Canadian Defence policy,¹ the second had even quicker and more salutary effects. White New Zealanders determined to adopt a more conciliatory Maori policy² and also to make the sacrifices necessary to quicken the flow of immigration.³

Lord Kimberley, who succeeded Granville at the Colonial Office in July 1870, made one attempt, directed at the Australian Colonies, to push another point which had caused some concern among the Radicals of the Financial Reform Union. Colonial tariff policies, seriously impeding imports from Great Britain at the very time when the Colonies were beholden for defence to the British Army and Navy, had, of course already led to serious objections and were destined for much longer to be the strongest argument in the armoury of Radical "Little Englanders." But when New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania proceeded from the collection of simple tariffs on all imports equally to the devising of tariff scales intended to give imports from one Australian Colony into another special advantages even over those from Britain, Lord Kimberley, not unaware of the support that would be forthcoming, made formal objection. If a meeting of delegates from the four Colonies thereupon protested against British interference with their mutual fiscal arrangements⁴ they had nevertheless been warned of the resentment felt by strong British sections against a tariff policy which was deemed to be doubly ungenerous.⁵

¹ An important landmark in the history of Canadian Defence is the establishment in 1875 of the Royal Military College at Kingston for the training of Canadian officers.

² Cf. H. J. Robinson's *Colonial Chronology*, p. 165, for the appointment of two Maori chiefs as members of the Legislative Council.

³ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 165, for the 31,774 immigrants of 1874 and the 18,000 of 1875. This policy was aided by the adoption of a "Public Works" plan of road and rail construction for which liberal loans were successfully floated on the London market. Sacrifice was therefore, perhaps, rather nominal than real and, indeed, the flow of British money, if it strengthened British sentiment (as Julius Vogel had prophesied it would do when in 1865 in his remarkable pamphlet *Great Britain and her Colonies* he had mooted the suggestion of making Colonial Loans, Trustee Stocks), led to some of those same "easy money" conditions which had flowed from British garrisons conducting expensive hostilities at the British taxpayer's cost.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 163, for these events of 1871.

⁵ Cf. the *Colonial Tariffs* pamphlet (No. 8) of the Financial Reform Union, issued in 1869. "The injustice of this system," runs one passage, "as respects the taxpayers of Great Britain and Ireland is apparent in the fact that we provide our distant colonists with soldiers . . . with fleets . . . and guarantee Colonial loans while the Colonists in return contribute nothing towards Imperial

But in a world already being fast prepared for "profitable development" by the increasing spread of the telegraph, cable, railway, and fast steamboat towards the "waste places"—not to mention the potent influence of the Stock Exchanges—the preservation of this lukewarm Radical-applauded attitude towards the Empire was to become increasingly difficult for Cabinet Ministers. Was not England, after all, the country with the hugest accumulation of exportable capital, weary of earning only low interest at home and in touch both with the best-connected and most experienced Stock Exchange in the world and with the widest variety of pioneering connoisseurs of the "waste places"? Were not philanthropic missionaries connected often with Radical Aborigines Protection forces at home, destined frequently to smooth the path of Empire and commercialisation by *bona fide* disarming or weakening of initial objections to Protectorates and annexations? Thus at the very time in 1868 when aggressive "pioneering" was about to begin the process of forcing a rather shamefaced British Government¹ to the 1871 annexation of the newly developed and fabulously wealthy diamond fields of Griqualand West—territory hitherto deemed to be within the limits of the Orange Free State—philanthropic forces secured the excision from the other side of the Orange Free State limits, of Basutoland.²

But perhaps the most revealing example of how naked commercial pioneering, waving the Union Jack, was able to ally with the Aborigines Protection Society and so procure Radicals in Parliament to urge distasteful annexations upon the Gladstone Government, is furnished by the Fiji Islands case of 1872. By this time the Gladstone Government, in pursuance of its Radical-

revenues, and lay an additional burden on the British taxpayer by means of import duties which restrict his business. When, moreover, it is considered that agricultural labourers, out of their scanty pittance, mechanics, operatives, and seamstresses from their hard earnings, and clerks, traders, and others struggling to maintain their position in life, are taxed for the benefit of independent, prosperous, and wealthy Colonists, the inequality and injustice of the system are aggravated."

¹ Cf. Sir H. Maxwell's *A Century of Empire*, iii, 249, for the £90,000 compensation eventually offered to and accepted by the Orange Free State. The British production of an hereditary chief, Nicholas Waterboer, who wished to be annexed, is at this distance of time almost comic. A better British justification altogether was the inability of the Orange River Boers to control the swarm of diggers who had flocked in from Natal, the Cape, Australia, and even England, and had proclaimed their own republic.

² There had been desperate fighting between Boers and Basutos.

Radicals and the Colonies 1853-1886

approved policy of retrenching Colonial expenses to the utmost, had not only withdrawn British troops from New Zealand, but had handed over the Canadian North-West to Confederation administration and Basutoland to that of Cape Colony. Yet new and troublesome responsibilities were threatening in the South Seas which Ministers were trying to avoid by the desperate expedient of treating Fiji chiefs, dominated already by a few hundred English-speaking plantation-founding¹ adventurers often of dubious origin and practice, as independent Powers. With them were signed consular and commercial treaties and further Conventions binding them against undertaking or supporting piracy and slave- and *kanaka*-raiding.

Protests had already come from the Australian Colonies against the British Cabinet's acceptance of the few hundred Englishmen ruling Fiji "in the name of the King" as an independent Government. Such treatment, it was urged, involved the recognition of their right "to regulate and possibly restrict intercourse" with "another fine field for British enterprise and a new outlet for British commerce."² Australian watchfulness against the development of independent authorities in a sphere already optimistically marked out for British-Australian Empire did not stand alone. When the matter came to be debated in Parliament on June 25, 1872, a greater impression seems to have been made by the Aborigines Protection Society's case for the declaration of a British Protectorate as the only real safeguard for the Fiji natives against ruin by whisky, venereal disease, and forced labour, and their best hope of obtaining conditions favouring education and Christianisation. And it was actually an "advanced Liberal," who had called loudly for Colonial Retrenchment in 1868 and 1869, who now led the movement to proclaim a Fiji Protectorate. *The Times*, indeed, claimed that "the debate marks an epoch in the Parliamentary history of Colonial Government and will assuredly be accepted throughout our dependencies as a proof that the current of English opinion no longer sets towards disintegration." Certainly when the Disraeli Government came into office in 1874 it was found possible to annex the Fiji Islands almost without

¹ Fiji cotton-planting adventurers seem to date from the "cotton-famine" of 1862.

² This and the rest is based on the Aborigines Protection Society pamphlet entitled *A British Protectorate in Fiji, Speech of Alderman McArthur, M.P., . . . Tuesday, June 25th, 1872.*

opposition. In 1877 the same Government went farther and appointed a High Commissioner for the Western Pacific Islands. Yet the obvious necessity of doing something to protect the aborigines from the white scoundrels and *kanaka*-raiders, most of them British, who were betaking themselves thither,¹ made it next to impossible to resist, on the old Radical grounds, a step which was a plain preliminary to a good deal of distant annexation.

It was, of course, on more exposed sides of Disraeli's "Imperialism" that Radical criticism tended to fasten—the deliberate bolstering-up of Turkey as a barrier to Russia and the expensive and perilous "forward" policies adopted on the Indian frontier and in Africa. But if "Beaconsfieldism" was temporarily defeated at the polls in April 1880, that defeat had been in doubt until the last moment.² It might have been altogether impossible but for the way in which strong Stock Exchange and Fleet Street support for the Prime Minister had been offset by the fortuitous combination of Gladstonian oratory, South African and Afghan reverses, and continued trade depression.

When Gladstone, moreover, set himself to reverse the tide of "Beaconsfieldism," the task proved altogether more difficult than he had supposed. A definite "Imperial" temper had been created partly by literary men³ and journalists⁴ whom the map of the world

¹ Cf. Campbell's *British Empire*, 1887, pp. 158-60, for the murderous raids from Queensland in order to force *kanaka* labour to the North Queensland sugar plantations.

² Some newspapers (e.g. the *Graphic*) had prophesied a Beaconsfield victory to the last owing to the greater "prestige" he had given England.

³ Carlyle was the father of this literary "Imperialism," and a survey of his writing from the *Past and Present* of 1843 onwards reveals his increasing distaste for democracy, his increasing hero-worship of "strong men," and his remarkable occasional suggestions for an Imperial emigration policy capable of making the British Empire dominate the world. By 1866 he had grown ready to lend his great name to the defence of Governor Eyre. On August 23, 1866, he wrote a letter, extensively reproduced, praising Eyre as "a just, humane, and valiant man, faithful to his trusts everywhere, and with no ordinary faculty for executing them; that his late services in Jamaica were of great, perhaps of incalculable value, as certainly they were of perilous and appalling difficulty . . . and, in short, that penalty and clamour are not the things the Governor merits from any of us, but honour and thanks, and wise imitation. . . ."

Froude, Carlyle's pupil and Disraeli's unofficial advance observer in South Africa, was another literary force helping the new Imperialist tendency and so, of course, was Disraeli himself through some of the remarkable Imperialist passages in his public speaking from 1875 onwards. Then Ruskin in the Oxford of 1870 during a lecture heard by Rhodes and supposed to have been his inspiration (cf. Sarah Millin's *Rhodes*, p. 29) had spoken of "a destiny now possible to us, the highest ever set before a nation to be accepted or refused. Will you youths of England make your country again a royal throne of kings, a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace . . . ? This

with its huge splashes of British red and its innumerable strategic points in British hands had completely fascinated; partly by the vast network of "Service interests," military, naval, legal, and administrative, to whom "Beaconsfieldism" had opened a new Heaven; partly by the increasing drift of great financial and commercial interests away from Cobdenism towards "prestige" politics; and partly even by reflection from Russian, American, and German expansionism. Carried on by the impetus of his electoral victory Gladstone was able to insist, against strong opposition, on the evacuation of Afghanistan in 1880 and of the Transvaal in 1881. But thenceforward his hand was being steadily forced by influences that he found it impossible to master. He was swept into Egypt in 1882; in 1883 the Australian Colonies were successfully conspiring to sweep him into New Guinea;¹ 1884 saw Gordon force his hand on the Sudan and a British Protectorate declared over the Lower Niger; and in 1885, finally, the British flag was being raised in the vast tracts of Bechuanaland.² It is questionable, indeed, whether Gladstone would have been able to avoid the annexation of Burma which was proclaimed on January 1, 1886, during the Conservative interregnum. Was it

is what England must do or perish. She must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of the most energetic and worthiest of men; seizing any piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea."

⁴ Cf. Estelle Stead's *My Father*, Chapter 8, for the 1880-5 record of W. T. Stead. Though, as editor of the *Darlington Northern Echo* he had been Gladstone's most influential supporter in the north-east on "Bulgarian Atrocities," etc., he was now first as sub-editor and then as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to adopt Imperial Federationism tempered, it is true, by anti-Jingoism still.

¹ Cf. Campbell's *British Empire*, pp. 121-2, for what may be called a "responsible" Radical view of the matter from an M.P. of long Indian experience: "Our hands were forced by the Australian colonists. The Australian demand for the annexation was due to two causes. First, the jealousy of possible foreign occupation and a tendency to a 'Monroe Doctrine' . . . and second, a hankering to exploit New Guinea, of which, as a new El Dorado, unknown and magnificent, many reports were current among the Colonists of North Queensland and elsewhere. It was most immediately Queensland which forced our hands by its action in annexing New Guinea on its own account the day after the departure of the British mail, an action which, though utterly disowned at the moment, we ended by practically accepting. . . ."

² Cf. Joseph Cowen's *Speeches*, p. 323: "The last addition to our Colonial Empire is the largest made for many years (Bechuanaland Colony is about 51,000 square miles in area; the definite Protectorate established at the same time covered an area of 120,000 square miles and less definite obligations, since extended to full Protectorate conditions, were assumed over a third area larger still). It is of exceptional interest, and likely to be of exceptional value. It will keep open the great trade route to the centre of Africa; and, if the reports as to its riches are to be trusted, it may turn out a second California or Victoria."

not advised and effected by a Viceroy whom he had himself nominated?

The great bulk of Radical opinion was, if anything, even less eagerly annexationist than the Gladstone Cabinet. But like the Ministers it could not permanently withstand the urgency of established commercial interests, say in the Niger, who showed good reason to fear French annexation and its inevitable sequel of high tariff customs barriers against British trade.¹ Nor could it persistently ignore the representations of old-established British missionary agencies in Bechuanaland, who had previously shown no particular zeal for mounting the Union Jack, and who now provided the most gruesome details of the Boer raiding and filibustering on tribes clamouring for British protection.² And to turn a deaf ear for ever to the fears of Cape Colony and Australia in regard to German annexationism in their vicinity proved just as impossible because just as politically perilous. Indeed, impressed by the "democratic" conditions and high wages ruling in the greater self-governing Colonies, even "Labour" showed a marked tendency to catch the Imperialist contagion.³

But if the old positions of Cobdenite Radicalism were inevitably and growingly abandoned; if no powerful political school now considered it to be practical politics avowedly to forward the "disintegration of the Empire," Radicals still found plenty of occupation in opposing the more theatrical⁴ and selfish aspects

¹ Cf. Fitzmaurice's *Life of Lord Granville*, ii, 339-40. In actual fact there was also peril of German annexation though the Foreign Office did not credit that for some time.

² Cf. Joseph Cowen's *Speeches*, pp. 320-1, for a vivid picture of Boer filibustering given to his constituents by this Newcastle Radical M.P., who had gone Imperialist.

³ Thus the Trade Union Congress of January 1884 heard some unprecedented matter. Davis's *History of the Trades Union Congress*, p. 104, thus summarises a Report read to the Congress: "The first International Congress met at Paris in October 1883, Messrs. A. W. Bailey, J. Burnett, and H. Broadhurst were the delegates appointed by the Parliamentary Committee. In commenting on their report, the full Committee found there was too much talk on revolutionary principles, and too little on practical questions for the Congress to be of service to the workers. On the other hand, it was reported that by Trade Union effort the Australian Colonies were making great progress." Lord Rosebery, again, who had been invited to address the Congress, "dealt in a masterly manner upon the wisdom of the Labour party throughout the British dominions acting together for the common good," and raised great applause when praising the Australian Labour achievements of the eight-hour day, direct Labour representation, and payment of members.

Finally it is worth noting that this Congress received an invitation to meet next in Toronto.

⁴ Thus some supporters of the Imperial Federation League, founded in

Radicals and the Colonies 1853-1886

of Imperialism. The dangerous idea of annexing Egypt, for example, was steadily combated and, despite ridicule from very opposite quarters, the hope of gradually building up an Egyptian Parliamentary democracy to which control might eventually be handed over was faithfully cherished.¹ Caution, again, was unremittingly urged against the over-effusive Imperial sentiment which could refuse the greater self-governing dominions nothing—even when as in the case of Canada and Newfoundland dangerous embroilments with America and France might follow and in the case of Australia,² resentful of German and French annexations in Oceania, a highly explosive situation in Europe. Here is a

1884, were so anxious to guard against “disintegration of the Empire” that they hastened to propose not merely an Imperial Customs Union but also an Imperial quasi-Legislature to treat of peace and war and to dispose of the Army and Navy. It was not merely Radicals who felt the impolicy of such over-haste, though it was to them that the unpleasant task fell of exposing the “special interests” that often sheltered beneath the Union Jacks of the Federationists—the Protectionists at home, for example, who dreamed of tariffs for themselves under the guise of preference arrangements for the Colonies, and Colonial Jingoists anxious to use the British Navy whether to frighten France and Germany out of Oceania or to drive a harder bargain with the United States on the Fisheries. It was, perhaps, fortunate that it was so acid an intelligence as Lord Salisbury’s that had to deal with the Imperial Federation propagandists when the Tories took charge after 1886. A more romantic Tory might have been edged into dangerous decisions at the Colonial Conference of 1887 (for Imperial Federation issues see the Marquis of Lorne’s balanced primer, *Imperial Federation*, 1885).

¹ Cf. Garvin’s *Chamberlain*, i, 451, for Chamberlain’s Cabinet memorandum on Egypt, October 18, 1882: “There is great anxiety lest, after all, the bondholders should too evidently be the only persons who have profited by the war, and lest phrases which have been used concerning the extension of Egyptian liberties, and Egypt for the Egyptians, should prove to have no practical meaning. . . . The duty cast upon us, as the Liberal Government of a free nation, is to secure to the Egyptian people the greatest possible development of representative institutions.”

² Cf. Lord Lorne’s *Imperial Federation*, p. 37, for the line taken by the Australian “high fliers,” and resented strongly by Radicals at home:

“While their countrymen have remained in the peaceful prosecution of industry at home, they (the colonists) have been engaged in the more arduous task of extending the influence, commerce, and civilisation of Great Britain in Canada, Australia, South Africa, and countless other possessions of the Crown. . . . They have been cheered with the conviction that in their several spheres they have been inducing the basis of a mighty Empire to be hereafter their protection and their pride. And it is with a feeling nearly approaching to resentment that they observe the prevalence of the idea in the minds of their fellow-countrymen at home in dealing with foreign or colonial subjects, that the only point to be considered is how it may affect themselves. Surely the time cannot be remote when the pressure of over-population—failing all other reason—will force Englishmen to recognise the truth that an Englishman in Australia is as good and useful a citizen of the British Empire as an ill-paid workman in Birmingham and Leeds, and that he is entitled to an equal voice in determining whether Egypt and the Suez Canal, through which his Communication with England is maintained, shall be left to anarchy, or whether France shall demoralise Oceania by making it the cesspool of her crime, vice, and infidelity. . . .”

quotation from one very statesmanlike "moderate" Radical politician that illustrates how strong was the brake which such men imposed upon the wilder flights of Imperial fancy:¹

I think it must be said at the outset that we must not be too timid—not seem so nervously anxious about the so-called Empire on which the sun never sets, that we are afraid to hold our own, not only in matters which concern ourselves alone, but in those which may embarrass us with foreign Powers or involve injustice to native races whom we are bound to protect. Petting is all very well up to a certain point; but there is a point beyond which it is bad for all parties . . . I will not conceal my view that, as we are situated, a friendly separation would be better than an unequal partnership on terms unfair to the Mother Country, and which might lead to bickerings and unpleasantness. . . .

So, if for any reason it came to political separation, it might be in the case of Canada, that would undoubtedly relieve us of great trans-Atlantic responsibilities. Australia is so distant that it may be that when whole generations grow up which are Australasian rather than British, and the Australian Colonies have greatly increased in numbers and strength, they may desire a separation which shall not interfere with most intimate and friendly relations. If these things did happen, I think we should still have ample scope for our energies in Asia, Africa, and the islands of the tropical seas. But I say so much merely by way of insisting that the union shall be on terms fair to the Mother Country, and not on terms under which we must continually concede everything. So long as union can be continued on fair terms, I quite agree that it is desirable to continue it . . . that it is not for us prematurely to cut off children who wish to stay with us. . . .

It was thanks to the existence of a strong Radical school of thought of this order in Parliament, in the Monthly Reviews and in the daily and weekly Press—in the last instance, indeed, there were Ultra-Radical organs like Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* and *Reynolds's Weekly* much more anti-Imperialist in tone—that the British Empire's reputation was saved from many dark stains. If it was frankly recognised that nothing could now be done for maltreated Australian aborigines or rebellious Canadian half-breeds with grievances save to work to the utmost to reinforce "better" sentiment in the self-governing dominions themselves,²

¹ From Sir George Campbell, M.P.'s, meritorious *British Empire* of 1887, pp. 25-6.

² Cf. Campbell's *British Empire*, p. 11: "In Canada we do not think of interfering between the Canadian Government and half-breeds or Red Indians. From Australia come stories, with or without foundation, of occasions on which the wild aborigines are shot down like vermin or practically enslaved. But we can only join our own public opinion to the better public opinion of Australia to deprecate the possibility of such things. . . ."

the case was different where Imperial responsibility had not yet been fully surrendered. In Natal, for example, it was made quite plain that full self-government rights would not be available until the dominant white minority¹ was prepared to assume the full risks and expense of preserving local order without the use of English forces. Indirectly this would mean, it was hoped, not merely saving for England, but the enforcement upon Natal of a benevolent "native policy" without which the attempted control by a white community of twelve times its number of coloured people was optimistically deemed to be impossible. In 1883, again, after Cape Colony had failed disastrously in fighting down the Basutos whom its unsympathetic administration had driven to rebellion, there was not a whisper of opposition when the British Government agreed to take Basutoland back from the Colonial rule to which it had been over-confidently committed in 1871.

With this precedent in mind, too, it was the Aborigines Protection Radicals who voiced the greatest opposition to such mooted schemes of Australian Federation as should envisage the making over of Imperial responsibilities in New Guinea to a federated Australia. The then over-forceful attitude even of "responsible" Australian opinion towards races "backward in the march of civilisation" and the memories, still fresh, of the dark deeds of the Queensland *kanaka*-raiders certainly seemed to give ample warrant for caution. And very similar opposition was expressed to any prompt gratification of the ambitions of New Zealand in the Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga Islands.²

In such an Empire as the British there was much else to cause Radical watchfulness and concern. The way, for example, in which a plantation colony like Mauritius might raise one set of problems

¹ Cf. Campbell's *British Empire*, p. 103: "In Natal there are some 400,000 coloured persons to 35,000 whites . . . but the Legislature is entirely in the hands of the latter, so far as regards the elected members, forming the great majority, 23 out of 30." Cf. also p. 110 for the ingenuity of the Natal "Reform Bill" of 1883 which the Colonial Office could not muster the courage to veto though it left the Voters' Register divided as follows: Europeans 7,596; Asiatics 41 (though numbers were equal to the European); Africans 10.

² Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 158-60. Dilke's *Greater Britain* of 1869 had said: "In outlying portions of the Empire there is no lack of the old savagery of our race. Battues of the natives were conducted by the military in Tasmania not more than twenty years ago, and are not unknown even now among the Queensland settlers. . . . Where one wretched untaught native pilfers from a sheep-station on the Queensland Downs, a dozen will be shot by the settlers 'as an example.' . . . Nothing will persuade the rougher class of Queensland settlers that the 'black-fellow' and his 'jin' are human. They tell you freely that they look upon the native Australian as an ingenious kind of monkey. . . ."

by promoting the immigration of Indian coolies¹ and another by arranging taxation and vagrancy laws oppressive even of the locally born coloured community liberated from slavery in 1834, had been revealed by the inquiries of a Royal Commission in 1874. Not merely Radicals but hardened Anglo-Indians seem to have been genuinely shocked by the appalling police tyranny which had resulted and to have blamed both planter-dictated laws and a local Administration over-strongly recruited from or connected with the planter element. Then there was constant Radical protest against allowing tradition, inertia, or the fear of clamour from powerful and interested minorities to prevent the reform of Colonial taxation systems raising large proportions of local revenue from duties on the imported food of the poor. Especially did the case of Malta provoke a steady stream of criticism, and the way in which the opposition of a virtually *fainéant* local nobility was allowed to rule out the substitution of an income-tax for import duties on food certainly seems difficult to defend.² There was ample criticism, too, of the food duties ruling in the West Indies and Ceylon.³

The new-style Chartered Companies of North Borneo and the Niger aroused further Radical doubts as to whether their necessarily dividend-hunting character might not result in serious dangers to the population of the "protected" territories over which their Charters gave them such wide control. And that these apprehensions had some justification was before long to be proved by the scandalous misuse of the South Africa Company's Charter of 1889. Or to turn to the sphere of international relations once more, it was Radical opinion after all which was left to raise such awkward questions as whether the British retention of Gibraltar

¹ Who when they had worked out their indentures were subjected to a "pass system" of unusual severity recklessly executed. The possibilities of oppression latent in a system requiring coolies to obtain a police permit to follow any occupation and to provide themselves also with a *carte d'identité* duly embellished with a photograph by a police-approved photographer, and a police report in every place of residence, seem to have been almost designed to drive them back to the semi-slavery of indentures.

² E.g. Samuel Plimsoll, the Derby M.P., sent a number of letters to *The Times* in 1879 which were later collected into a pamphlet on *The Condition of Malta*.

³ This subject is the main theme of the Cobden Club volume on *The Crown Colonies of Great Britain*, by C. S. Salmon (2nd edition, 1886). The Cobden Club would naturally feel warm on this issue, and the author tried to make it feel warmer by asserting that proselytes to Free Trade would never be made among the nations while food-tariff systems so widely survived in the British Empire itself (p. 5).

was to be regarded as part of the order of nature; whether it was not unwise to watch with such jealousy and suspicion every German and French annexation; and whether it really was beyond the power of British diplomacy to arrange an evacuation of Egypt in return for non-occupation pledges from the rest of the world. In regard to relations with the fully self-governing dominions, finally, it was Radicals who found most need to be watchful against Imperialist tendencies to exaggerate the actual measure of their trade or over-emphasise their importance as places of settlement for "surplus population." It was often necessary to point out, for example, that the United States still attracted far more British emigration than the whole Empire put together, and that the dominions had in fact already begun to confine emigration "assistance" to the very types of population England could least afford to lose.¹

¹ On all the matters here dealt with, the shrewd penetration of Sir George Campbell, M.P.'s, *British Empire* (1887) makes it a veritable compendium of "moderate Radical" wisdom. Dilke's *Present Position of European Politics* (1887) has some valuable evidence on European complications resulting from British Empire issues and his *Problems of Greater Britain* of early 1890 is also useful. Finally Joseph Arch's *Story of His Life* (pp. 366-367) may be quoted for a candid view of such State-aided emigration to the Colonies as the Imperialists were asking for by the end of our period. "We have," he declared, "a great deal said now by some of our landed proprietors about adopting a scheme of State-aided emigration. They want Government to 'copper down' about a million of money to send the surplus labour out of our country. . . . They tell us it is not 'emigration' but 'colonisation.' . . . If you are going to emigrate the drunken loafers out of your towns—the cadger, the idle fellow, who won't work at all—I say that the colonies don't want that class of man. If you are going to emigrate the most intelligent and the best workmen, then I ask, Can we as a country afford to lose them? I say, Certainly not. I cannot understand State-aided emigration unless it is to emigrate those who 'toil not, neither do they spin.'" Arch was now seeing the normal agricultural labourer's best hope in a home system of publicly-owned, low-rented small holdings, compulsorily acquirable from landlords by democratic local councils.

CHAPTER XXIII

RADICALS AND INDIA

"In the year 1839 was formed the first organisation in this country for Indian Reform. . . . The British India Society . . . was the first body which attempted to make the responsibilities of England towards India a national question. It committed the great fault of attempting to carry public opinion by storm through the agitation of public meetings, instead of slowly training it by the circulation of weighty documents. It was sneered at by *The Times*. . . . It was dogmatically rebuked . . . by the *Edinburgh Review*. But its work was not fruitless. The deep and earnest interest which the working classes in particular, throughout a large portion of England, took in its proceedings showed that it had truly struck a national chord in their hearts. And though its most genuine workers have remained unnoticed . . . the name of the society should not be forgotten. . . . For the branches of it which sprang up in India are still alive, and comprise the most intelligent and energetic members of the population."

J. M. LUDLOW's "British India" (1858), ii, 152-3.

"As regards Liberal Reformers, the feeling of hopelessness which so long dominated their minds in respect to the vastness, complexity, and difficulty of Indian affairs is giving way. It is now realised that there are certain broad principles of progress in Indian administration as in English, that these may be readily grasped and effort undertaken with regard to them. So strongly and so widely prevalent is this view becoming that ere long it may be anticipated special broadly defined Indian reforms will take a regular place in the programmes discussed on Liberal platforms. For example, here are four:

- (1) Reform in the Civil Service, whereby the way shall be made easy for natives of capacity, without needing to come to England for education, to enter that service;
- (2) The establishment in the various Presidencies and Provinces, of Legislative Assemblies, partly nominated and partly elective, to which large control over finance shall be given:
- (3) Army Reform, whereby the Imperial and Native Armies shall be amalgamated, to the increased advantage of the State . . . and great saving in expenditure. . . .
- (4) Improved relations established between, and a juster policy exhibited towards the Native Indian States by the Paramount Power. . . ."

"India's Interest in the British Ballot Box," by WILLIAM DIGBY, C.I.E., *Liberal candidate for N. Paddington* (1885).
First edition 20,000 copies; Price 6d.; pp. xv and 112.

THE great Indian business of the Session of 1853 was Charter renewal. The East India Company's last Charter, arranged in 1833, was now running out, and even the Conservative Whig at the Board of Control had armed himself with a great deal of official evidence in order to force large changes of form upon the Company. That it was still, however, proposed to govern a vast Empire through the instrumentality of a City Joint Stock Company was partly the result of pure traditionalism. Yet in point of fact the Company solution was also regarded as avoiding some of the thornier patronage problems which had wrecked a strong Government in 1783 in a fashion that had never been forgotten by the "governing classes."

The official plan, then, actually proposed what were conscientiously considered as large reforms.¹ Their adoption, it was hoped, would render it considerably less likely that future purchases of India stock would be made by wealthy persons with relatives to place in India, or by City merchants with India House contracts in mind and regarding their India stock, not merely as an investment, but also as giving them the means of obliging old Directors and making new ones. Directors, too, whose main power had hitherto lain so much in their ability to place their own relatives and those of their friends in Indian posts that they were often suspected of regarding an annexation as "affording an opening to so many writers" and a war as "a windfall of so many cadetships," would also be made to feel the effects of the proposed reforms. The patronage of the Civil and Medical Services was to be taken from them and future appointments decided by examination; Directors' numbers were to be reduced and there was to be a deduction even from the reduced numbers to allow of the nomination of Crown Directors with at least ten years' Indian experience; and, finally, among the stockholder-elected Directors also, a certain number of places were to be reserved for those with ten years' experience of India.² And if it was sought to give some compensation to the ruling Directorial personalities at India House by increasing salaries and giving Directors a six years' tenure before re-election became necessary, these things might themselves

¹ The conditions of the 1853 Charter will be found embodied in the 16 & 17 Vict., cap. 35.

² The new Court of Directors was to begin with 3 Crown Directors and 15 elected Directors, 6 of them with ten years' experience of India. The composition was gradually to be changed to 6 Crown Directors and 12 elected Directors.

be regarded as reforms since they would help Directors to take a larger view of their responsibilities.

A strong Radical group, however, was forming which while it might admit that the changes proposed by the Government would certainly not make matters worse yet demanded an altogether wider outlook on Indian problems than the Government's proposals showed. It was not merely that the suggested Charter still left the appointment of a Directorial majority to stock-holding "old maids of Bath and London coachmakers" or that Directorial patronage seemed likely to recover most of its old importance from the fact that constant additions to the functions of Indian Government were taking place¹ and that appointments flowing therefrom would be for the Directors to make. The India Reform Society, which counted 39 Radical M.P.s² among its adherents, based its objections to the Government proposals on much more fundamental grounds than these. Many of its members had long suspected that only the completest unsoundness in the Indian taxation system could account for India's terrible poverty,³ and that only a singularly unhelpful Government could have remained blind to the advisability of encouraging the British Cotton Industry's projects of building up in India a cotton supply which would replace America's slave-produced raw material.⁴ They felt, too, there was good reason to suspect that the officially controlled inquiry, which had preceded the Government India Bill, had not only failed to come to grips with such problems as these but had also been steered carefully past all manner of other problems. There was, for instance, the ludicrously tiny proportion of Indian

¹ Ludlow's *British India* gave the telegraph service as an example, ii, 269.

² The M.P.s, nearly all of the "Manchester School," will be found listed in the Society's literature, together with other "personalities" like the ageing Sharman Crawford and the youthful William Vernon Harcourt.

³ One of the members, F. C. Brown, had as long back as 1847 produced an indictment of the taxation system in his work, *Free Trade and the Cotton Question with reference to India*.

⁴ A good deal of the story of how Joseph Pease of Darlington, moved at first to his British India Society activities merely by the desire to force the East India Company to decree the Abolition of Indian Slavery (decreed 1843), came to expand the scope of his efforts will be found in John Hyslop Bell's *British Folks and British India Fifty Years Ago*. To force the East India Company to promote a great expansion of cotton cultivation became before long a principal aim with the Society mainly for the sake of the poverty-stricken natives of India themselves. And so that pressure might be brought to bear on the Company, Manchester and Glasgow cotton interests were treated to pictures of what might overtake them if an Indian cotton supply was not built up, pictures which were astonishingly verified in 1862.

revenues devoted to roads, irrigation, and education, the frequent high-handed treatment of native princes, and the constant and costly war-making of the Indian Government. In regard to this last the India Reform Society was prepared to affirm that adequate inquiry would have affixed the responsibility on "Double Government" by Directors and Board of Control with its special facilities for masking the instigators of "defensive wars."

All these things and many others will be found treated in the quick succession of tracts¹ which the India Reform Society issued in the attempt to force the Government to agree to make its proposed Charter merely a temporary one for three years. During this time, it was urged, permanent legislation could be under preparation based not merely on the "evidence of officials and servants of the East India Company," but also on "the petitions and wishes of the more intelligent of the natives of India." The Society could not have found an abler or more courageous spokesman than Bright, who obviously made a great impression on the House of Commons² even if he did not succeed in securing any large alterations of principle in the Government's legislative plans.

The catastrophe of the Indian Mutiny brought, of course, some measure of justification to the Radical critics of 1853. It certainly induced both Whigs and Tories to agree to the necessity of ending "Double Government" by winding up the East India Company and making a Secretary of State, advised by an India Council and answerable to Parliament, directly and undividedly responsible for the welfare of India. It is interesting also to see how during the inevitable and widespread discussions on the Indian situation that went on in 1857 and 1858, Radicals had special

¹ These tracts, issued at 3d. each, were full of relevant information. Their titles were: No. 1, *The Government of India since 1834* (pp. 27); No. 2, *The Finances of India* (pp. 30); No. 3, *Notes on India by Dr. Buist of Bombay* (pp. 24); No. 4, *The Native States of India* (pp. 26); No. 5, *Extracts from Mill's History on the Double Government and Observations on the Evidence given before the Parliamentary Committees in 1852* (pp. 56); No. 6, *The Government of India under a Bureaucracy by John Dickinson, Junr.* (Secretary of the Society), pp. 148; No. 7, *India Wrongs without a Remedy* (pp. 47); Nos. 8, 9, 10, and 11 were announced as preparing under the following titles: *Public Works*, *Miscellaneous Papers*, *The Nature of the India Question and the Evidence upon it* and *Condition of the Subjects of the Native Princes before the Period of British Supremacy*. Taken all in all, this activity was almost unprecedented.

² Cf. *Supra*, p. 17. Bright's success went little farther than carrying an amendment prohibiting the canvassing of shareholders by candidates for Directorships.

chances of pushing their views. Nothing is more striking, for example, in the whole of Harriet Martineau's little 1857 textbook on *British Rule in India* than her account of the ryot oppression which had followed both on Cornwallis's short-sighted Zemindar settlement of 1793 in Bengal and Sir Thomas Munro's later attempt to be more philanthropic in the Madras Presidency. Here is her story of what happened in consequence of Munro's well-intentioned attempt to collect Madras's Land Revenue in a more equitable fashion than Bengal's:¹

The plan of survey, minute and meddlesome, let loose an army of rapacious native agents upon the poor ryots, who were accustomed to suppose that nothing could be done without bribes. According to Sir Thomas Munro himself, not more than five per cent of subordinate officials were innocent of peculation. As for the collection of the small instalments of rent (or tax, whichever it is called) it afforded more opportunity for oppression and corruption. . . . Upon one pretence or another the lower functionaries of the State might interfere with the ryot almost every day. . . ."

That well-known and well-informed Christian Socialist, J. M. Ludlow, was even more caustic on Indian systems of taxation in a series of lectures addressed to the Students of the Working Men's College and reproduced in book form as the two-volume *British India: its Races and History*. Here, for example, is his treatment of the Indian Land Revenue:²

Of the three systems of Land Revenue adopted by the Company, two are fearfully harassing to the people: one of them, the Zemindari, so bad that it would seem that nothing absolutely could be worse, until we discover the ryotwari system of Madras and Bombay even surpasses it in badness; whilst the third in the North West, good in itself, bears yet strong presumption of over-assessment. . . .

And Ludlow's summing-up of the taxation system as a whole, after he had finished criticising it tax by tax, was no less than this:³ "Almost every branch of the Company's revenue is collected in the most wasteful manner to the State: in the most vexatious to the taxpayer: in the most demoralising to the consumer."

It was in Ludlow's addresses, too, that some of London's working-class leaders got their first insight into the monstrous abuses possible in the Indian police system. There was already

¹ Martineau's *British Rule in India*, p. 179.

² Ludlow's *British India*, ii, 299.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 310.

an official report available on Police Tortures in Madras, and if the notorious "Revelations of an Orderly" was altogether unofficial, it none the less unfolded to the world a sorry picture of the rascalities committed by the "native officers of justice" through whose greedy hands defendants and plaintiffs had alike to go before they got to Court. These things only tended to confirm the disquiet already aroused in sympathetic quarters by native petitions complaining of the police as "a great engine of oppression" incapable of putting down crime and criminals, but very capable of "trumping up charges against any number of persons" and using torture on a great scale to extort confessions.¹

It is, of course, impossible when reading such a veritable official apologia as *Sir Charles Wood's Administration of Indian Affairs, 1859-1866*,² to decide how far all such Radical criticism as has been cited had definite and tangible effects on the new India Office. It may, however, be assumed that the very considerable Public Works activity undertaken in India after the Mutiny was at least stimulated by the Radical criticisms which had been made in 1853 and repeated in 1857 and 1858.³ Unfortunately it was to be proved by the next generation of Radical critics that estimable as were the intentions of the Secretary of State in borrowing for State works and in tempting British capital to execute railway, harbour, and irrigation schemes by offering it guaranteed interest, the official manner of executing the policy had often been disastrous for the Indian Treasury. It was the celebrated Radical politician and economist, Fawcett, who by patient investigation in the Committees on Indian Finance of 1871, 1872, 1873, and 1874 was to elicit such facts as the three-quarters of a million that had been vainly spent on the Godavery Navigation Works, the £1,372,000 that had been lost on guaranteeing the Madras Irrigation Company, and the large additional losses that had

¹ Ludlow's *British India*, ii, 284-9. Cf. Dilke's *Greater Britain* (ed. 1870, p. 548) for the situation ten years later: "To the inhabitants of the greater portion of rural India, the governor who symbolises British rule is a cruel and corrupt policeman." Dilke's one hundred and fifty pages on the India of 1866-7 are most valuable. Dilke was fully conscious, for example, of the barbarities of the Mutiny suppression, and of the natives' hatred of their British masters.

² By Algernon West, 1867.

³ Cf. Bright in *Hansard*, June 24, 1858: "... the single city of Manchester, in the supply of its inhabitants with the single article of water, has spent a larger sum of money than the East India Company has spent in the fourteen years from 1834 to 1848 in public works of every kind throughout the whole of its vast dominions."

resulted from guaranteeing the Mutlah Railway, the Orissa Company, and the Elphinstone Company of Bombay.¹

Fawcett had been induced to enter the whole tangled field of Indian finance by his growing conviction, after experiences similar to those which had infuriated a previous Radical generation, that India was not receiving justice at British hands. He began with a protest against burdening "the toiling Indian peasant" with the charge for a brilliant India House Ball offered to the Sultan of Turkey while that potentate was on a visit to London in July 1867.² Later in the year he complained of the way in which the Tory Government of the day proposed to fight its Abyssinian war largely with Indian troops and yet planned to leave all their normal costs on the Indian Budget and charge England merely with their "extraordinary" expenses.³ On May 5, 1868, Fawcett had taken a further step on his way to becoming "member for India" by trying to force the Government to hold the Indian Civil Service Entrance Examination not only in London but also simultaneously in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. That was, claimed Fawcett, the only way by which natives of India would be given fairer chances in the "open" competition for filling places in the Civil Service of their own country.⁴

Nor did Fawcett's vigilance on behalf of India relax after the Tory Government of 1866-8 had given way to the Gladstone Liberal Government of 1868-74. In August 1870 he made a striking intervention on the Indian Budget. Complaining that the Indian Accounts should have been left to the fag-end of the Session,⁵ when it was especially unlikely that they would get the Parliamentary attention they merited, Fawcett went on to outline a number of other Indian grievances most effectively. From the Parliamentary standpoint his most telling passage was, perhaps, that in which he bitterly commented on the "melancholy mean-

¹ The Committee on Public Works appointed in 1878 and reporting in 1879 made the position clearer. So did the Select Committee of 1879 which reported on the unduly favourable terms of purchase offered to the shareholders of the East Indian Railway.

² Cf. *Hansard*, July 19th. What made the matter worse from the Radical standpoint was the eagerness of rich and fashionable London to intrigue and scramble for invitations to what promised to be the supreme social event of the season, an event, too, giving considerable employment and causing much expenditure in London, but having to be paid for by India.

³ On the easy assumption that the ordinary expenditure would have had to be made by India in any case. This was one way of making the war less unpopular in England—at India's expense.

⁴ *Hansard*, May 5th.

⁵ August 5th (Cf. *Hansard*).

ness" with which gifts, to a total of £10,000, lately distributed by the Duke of Edinburgh while on a visit to India, had been put upon the Indian Budget. But he was actually on larger ground when quoting a former "Chancellor of the Exchequer" of India¹ to prove that Indian finances were constantly being sacrificed to English political considerations and military policy. Certainly Mr. Gladstone was sufficiently impressed to admit that the Indian Accounts might well have come on earlier and that a Committee on Indian Finance might, with advantage, be appointed in the following Session. More than this, his Government itself took the initiative in obtaining such a Committee, which sat in 1871, 1872, and 1873 and, with some inevitable reconstruction following on the General Election of 1874, in 1874 also.

Some of the Public Works losses to the Indian Budget which Fawcett was instrumental in elucidating while serving on this Committee have already been detailed. But Fawcett's services extended much farther. His careful study of the often very involved public accounts of India over the previous decade frequently enabled him to reveal other serious instances of wasteful or dubious expenditure, nearly all indicative of Britain's bland disregard of India's terrible poverty whenever its own interests were at stake. It was especially from the 1860 decision to "reconstitute" the Indian Army in order to allow of its virtual amalgamation with the British that Fawcett found heavy and, it was urged, unnecessary expenditure proceeding. The decision to end the old "independence" of the Indian Army had had to be forced upon the Secretary of State and an almost unanimous India Council² by the Horse Guards³ taking full advantage of the fact that their troops had had to be drawn upon very heavily to suppress the Mutiny. One of the effects, however, that Fawcett found to be flowing from this amalgamation decision ever since 1860 was the alleged necessity of giving "satisfaction" to officers of the old Indian Army who were retired earlier in consequence

¹ This was the name that was being applied to the Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council. The particular official cited by Fawcett was Samuel Laing, who had in 1860 and 1861 completed the work of transforming Company into Government of India Finance begun in 1859 by John Wilson (d. 1860). Laing had become a Liberal M.P. in 1865 (Cf. *Dict. Nat. Biography*).

² Cf. Leslie Stephen's *Life of Fawcett*, p. 370: "Lord Lawrence said in 1873 that the Indian Council had objected to it unanimously. Out of fifteen members of the Council fourteen had recorded their protests against it. . . . The Governor-General had also sent home his objections. . . ."

³ A term in frequent use for the Commander-in-Chief's Department.

or found their promotion somewhat slower. Altogether "making things pleasant for the old Army" in the 60's had imposed upon Indian Revenues a new though gradually diminishing burden which at its peak point was variously estimated at between £577,000 and £1,000,000 per annum.¹

But this was not the worst result of the Army changes even from a purely financial point of view. It was found, for example, that the Horse Guards' charge for providing a new British soldier for Indian service was very much higher than that which had been made by the East India Company's own independent recruiting system. Thus between 1849 and 1859 the independent Indian Army had reckoned its recruiting costs in England at under £20 per head. In 1873, however, under the altered arrangements India was being charged £58 for every artilleryman supplied, £63 for every infantryman, and £136 for every cavalryman.² It is true that the higher charges were defended as due to the expense of giving some pre-embarkation training to the recruits. But much of the plausibility of this justification was lost when it was remembered that British military plans envisaged the diversion of these recruits for British purposes in certain emergencies and that training in England was necessarily harder for India to finance than training in India. Even barrack expenditure under the new regulations was found to be costly and unsatisfactory enough to provide Fawcett with further evidence for building up his case that the partnership of England and India had involved an extravagant expenditure on the part of the poorer partner. It is, perhaps, plain by what services Fawcett earned the gratitude of politically conscious native India and why his fellow Radicals came to pay increasing attention to his Indian views.

During the epoch of "Beaconsfieldism" between 1875 and 1880 India tended to become more and more a topic of direct party dispute with the Radical wing of the Opposition leading the struggle against the more theatrical Imperialist exhibitions of the Prime Minister. Some attention has already been given in a previous chapter to the furious fight that was waged against

¹ Cf. Stephen's *Fawcett*, p. 371. This book's interpretation of Fawcett's Indian activity has been found very reliable.

² These are the actual figures from the official letter of the Indian Government to the Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State (May 15, 1873). These charges the Indian Government ventured to describe as "scandalously unjust."

the Empress of India title bestowed upon the Queen in 1876. The despatch during the spring of 1878 of Indian troops to Malta in circumstances of doubtful constitutionality aroused more hot dispute¹—and in both England and India the further awkward question as to whether India was not being exposed to expense and danger owing to Anglo-Russian quarrels on a European issue.² But it was the ambitious and costly “scientific frontier” policy, extended from the Baluchistan annexations and protectorates of 1876 to the Afghan invasion of 1878, which was destined to produce the major political contentions on India. The strong flavour of Imperialist and not very scrupulous aggression which emanated from the whole Afghan proceedings would have aroused fierce Radical ire in any case. But Radical fury was further stimulated both by the Government’s short-sightedness in expecting a mere Army parade through Afghanistan instead of the prolonged struggle, punctuated by serious reverses, which actually took place and by the fact that the great bill of military costs mounting up against India could not have come at a more dangerous time. The fall in the gold price of silver had already hit the Indian rupee so hard on the Exchange markets that by 1877 India was having to find two millions a year extra in order to meet debt interest owed to England and the variety of London accounts, from India Office salaries downwards, known collectively as “home charges.” Nor was this the only strain on Indian Public Finance to be aggravated by the costly and unfortunate Afghan adventure. To see the full exposedness of “Beaconsfieldism” to attack it is necessary to remember that in the five years from 1873 to 1878 famine had reigned so widely in India that nearly £16,500,000 had had to be expended in famine relief.³

Early in 1879, therefore, even the leading review of the day, the *Nineteenth Century*, may be found printing an article by H. M. Hyndman, the future Socialist leader, under so startling a title as “The Bankruptcy of India.”⁴ And some of its content was as startling as its title. Here is one typical passage:

¹ Cf. *Hansard*, May 20th, for the opening of debates in both Houses on Opposition motions of Censure.

² It was awkward for the Government that Lord Salisbury was on record as having protested during an Abyssinian war debate of 1867 against the British tendency to look upon India “as an English barrack in the Oriental seas from which we may draw any number of troops without paying for them.”

³ The £16,500,000 figure includes remission of land-tax.

⁴ *Nineteenth Century*, February 1879.

The total net revenue of India, even now that the extra taxation has been imposed, is scarcely forty millions a year, and of this sum little short of one half will be expended in home charges alone, when the loss by exchange is taken into account. Apart from the gradual substitution of natives for Europeans in all branches of administrative management . . . the only hope of improvement lies in persistent economy. . . . Economy must commence with the army, the public works, and the home expenditure. . . . To say that in future India must be governed for the sake of its inhabitants, means undoubtedly the displacement in the future of many of our countrymen from offices in that country. But we must not shrink from this necessary change because of its difficulty or the opposition it will provoke.

For some time, however, thanks to the temporary collapse of Afghan resistance during the spring of 1879, it looked as though the Beaconsfield Government might successfully laugh off its Radical assailants. Yet it is significant that even while it was able to exult in the apparent falsification of Opposition prophecies of woe in Afghanistan, it was promising India "a large reduction of expenditure" in terms that satisfied Fawcett himself.¹ Even more significant, perhaps, is the fact that when the Government, in regard to military expenditure then estimated at £2,600,000, suggested that an equitable arrangement as between England and India was that England should lend India two millions free of interest, Fawcett was able to divide against it at 125-137 on the ground of injustice to India.² Then came the first Kabul rising of September suppressed by an army sent from India at a cost which forced the Indian Government to decree drastic economies at once.³ When Kabul rose again in December in a manner so menacing that a second army from India had to hurry in to relieve the first, and when both armies in the early months of 1880 found themselves facing a national Afghan resistance, it became plain that a turning-point had arrived in the relations between England and India.

Indian financial conditions alone would, of course, have forced some vital decisions of principle even upon a Beaconsfield Government. By hurrying out a new Viceroy to replace Beaconsfield's,⁴

¹ Cf. *Hansard*, May 29th.

² Cf. *Ibid.*, July 25th.

³ Cf. Fawcett's treatment of the situation in his article on "The New Departure in Indian Finance" in the *Nineteenth Century* for October 1879. A platform treatment of the seriousness of the Indian financial position was undertaken by Gladstone during his Midlothian campaign (Edinburgh Corn Exchange, November 29th).

⁴ Cf. *The Queen and Mr. Gladstone*, ii, 89-90, for Gladstone's three notes of April 27th to the Queen. In one of them he spoke of the "extreme pressure of

the Gladstone Government, which took office in April 1880, showed plainly that it meant to make some very drastic alterations in the way things had been going of late in India. But in point of fact the new Viceroy, the Marquis of Ripon, was fated to do much more than wind up the Afghan adventure¹ and attempt reductions of Army and Civil Service expenditure which might permit some remissions of the most burdensome types of taxation. He was fated to be the first Viceroy who made the conscious attempt to carry "educated native" opinion with him in his management of India.

As Gladstone himself knew from the native petitions he had been asked to present, political self-consciousness had grown enormously in India during the epoch of "Beaconsfieldism."² There had been agitation against new taxation imposed in 1877 and alleged to be unfairly designed and oppressively assessed; while the struggle against the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 to muzzle the native newspapers had spread even to Westminster. Still more epoch-making had been the Indian protests of 1879 against allowing Lancashire's interest to dictate the lowering of the slight tariff barrier under whose shelter some Indian cotton factories had been started in replacement of the vast handicraft industry which Lancashire factory cotton had destroyed. The agitation of these and other grievances had raised a new temper in "educated India" which watched with excited attention the furious Radical efforts being made in England to dislodge the offending Government. Already in 1880 Calcutta correspondents may be found communicating to Fleet Street messages ominously indicating that the Anglo-Indian community and the native leaders were looking to opposite political camps in England.

time (it being so necessary that a new Viceroy should go out, and impossible to keep his preparations secret)" as a reason for the prompt announcement to the Press.

¹ Cf. The Marquis of Ripon's own speech at Bolton, August 24, 1885, on the critical situation he found in June 1880: "Recruiting had ceased in India—although the Government which preceded me had resorted to the unusual—I believe unprecedented—attempt of offering a bounty for recruits. . . . I found a vast expenditure of money going on. . . . I found useful work and productive expenditure suspended in every direction . . . and a general feeling of dissatisfaction and uneasiness spread throughout the country which led to the most exaggerated alarms. . . ."

² Cf. *Hansard*, July 23, 1878, for Gladstone on the Vernacular Press. He divided against the Government at 152-208. It is more surprising to find Gladstone accepting Indian criticisms of the Arms Act with its special restrictions on the importation of arms, gunpowder, and explosives (Glasgow Speech, December 5, 1879).

Here, for example, is the *Graphic's* correspondent reporting the effect of the General Election of 1880 upon India even before the last results could have been in:¹

The elections in England continue to excite the most intense interest, and their probable effect upon the Afghan policy is widely discussed, though the fear that the Liberal Ministry would abandon Afghanistan has been calmed by Mr. Gladstone's declaration that however the Liberals disapproved their predecessors' action, they would not undo what had already been done. The native papers, however, express great delight at the Liberal success, as the present Government is unpopular with the natives owing to the Vernacular Press and Arms Acts, the linen tax, the remission of the cotton duties, and the attempt to saddle India with the entire cost of the Afghan War. . . .

The famous Ripon policy can now be outlined. Afghanistan was evacuated in 1880. In 1881 a striking example was given of a wholly new temper towards native administration, Mysore being returned to the full control of the titular Maharajah though it had been under British administration since 1834. For the first time the "red line" on the map of India had receded, a Baroda precedent of 1875 being far surpassed.² In 1882 there was the Budget offering India remission of virtually all import duties,³ and meanwhile highly important measures for protecting ryots against Zemindar oppression,⁴ for increasing the provision of elementary education⁵ and for extending the scope and responsibility of elective local boards⁶ were advancing nearer their final stages.

A large section of the English community in India had regarded the philo-native policy of the Indian Government with increasing dislike. When in February 1883 the famous Ilbert Bill appeared,

¹ *Graphic*, April 17th.

² Cf. Cotton and Payne, *Colonies and Dependencies* (1883), p. 83: "For Baroda an infant Gaekwar was found by adoption, and during his minority the entire government was entrusted to an eminent native minister. . . . The case of Mysore is still stronger. The whole staff of English officials has been superseded by natives; and for the first time in history the 'red line' on the map of India has receded . . . if Mysore prospers under native administration, as Travancore has long prospered, why should English collectors be necessary for the adjoining districts of the Madras Presidency?"

³ Arms, ammunition, opium, liquors, and salt were the exceptions.

⁴ Zemindar opposition held up the definite enactment of the Bengal Tenancy Bill till 1885.

⁵ Cf. Cotton and Payne's *Colonies and Dependencies* (Indian section, p. 85) for the aims and activities of Ripon's Education Commission.

⁶ Justified partially as an instrument of political and popular education in the Governor-General-in-Council's Resolution of May 18, 1882.

Anglo-Indian exasperation boiled over in a long and angry agitation.¹ The Ilbert Bill, so-called from the name of the member of the Indian Government who introduced it in the Legislative Council, proposed to make provision for the case which would plainly arise before long even if the Conservative policy of admitting natives to one-sixth of the places in the "Covenanted Service" was not meanwhile extended—the case that there might be in a district no English magistrate to conduct the trial of English or European accused. Native members of the Covenanted Service were now to be put on terms of perfect equality with European members so that all sessions judges, district magistrates, and "selected magistrates of the first class" would in future have the jurisdiction in question. The bitter agitation of the English community, supported by Conservative circles at home, eventually forced a modification of the Ilbert Bill, though not the total withdrawal that had at one time seemed likely. Only sessions judges and district magistrates of Indian races were entrusted with jurisdiction over Englishmen.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the historic importance of the furious and colour-prejudiced opposition of the European community in India to the Ilbert Bill. On the one hand, it served vastly to heighten national feeling among all the insulted native races so that the remarkable ovations of gratitude made to Lord Ripon before his departure in 1884 must count as the first national manifestation of Modern India² and a fitting prelude to the assembly of the first Indian National Congress in 1885. On the other hand, after such an exhibition in India, Radical and Ultra-

¹ Cf. *Whitaker's Almanack*, 1885, p. 288.

² Digby's *India's Interest in the British Ballot Box* (1885) quotes a striking passage from an article contributed by an Indian journal by Sir Auckland Colvin, Finance Member of the Viceroy's Council, on the occasion of the Ripon demonstrations. Under the title of "If it be Real—What does it Mean?" Sir Auckland wrote: "So far from being superficial, the demonstrations now being made throughout the country are significant of a profound change which for many years has been preparing itself, and which the incidents of Lord Ripon's administration, more particularly those connected with the passing of the Criminal Process Bill, have brought into the foreground of events. . . . It will be asked, why, if such a change was occurring, Englishmen in India failed to be conscious of it. At any time a great administrative service, whether it be that of the Napoleonic Prefecture or of the Indian Civil Service, is, from the nature of its existence, unwilling to recognise progress, other than that which it has itself promoted and presided over. . . . We come next to the criticism that the movement is greatly exaggerated. To those conversant with native society in the presidency-towns of India, or in such cities as Poona, Allahabad, or Lucknow, the change in native thought and native life is, for the most part, obvious. . . ."

Radical sympathies in England were more than ever alienated from Anglo-Indians who claimed that the British Empire in India was "the most useful and the most beneficent government that ever existed," and that all that was wrong with India was "the restless, dissatisfied officious interference" of English Radicals.¹

After this prelude it might in certain circumstances have been possible for Indian affairs to play some part among the issues at the General Election then approaching. Certainly considerable attempts were made by native India and sympathetic Anglo-Indians allied with them to keep Indian issues to the front among the Liberal party.² And it almost seemed for a time that Lord Randolph Churchill, Secretary for India in the Tory "caretaker Government" that was formed in June 1885, would assist them. There could have been few more extraordinary official speeches made in Parliament than the violent and unbalanced attack on Lord Ripon with which Lord Randolph Churchill sought to focus attention on his Indian Budget of August 6th.³

"I declare," declaimed Lord Randolph, "that I have endeavoured to contemplate the action of the late Government of India without any party passion at all. I found in it not one redeeming feature. It was so clumsily, so stupidly handled that progress has been thrown back almost for a generation; and having to place these results before the House of Commons in the practical matter-of-fact form of figures and finances, I disown and repudiate on the part of the present Government all respon-

¹ These quotations are from the article on "The Government of India," by Mr. Justice Stephen in the *Nineteenth Century* of October 1883. The Reviews of 1883 and 1884 will be found well supplied with articles on India. Among the most remarkable are the two which the *Nineteenth Century* printed in July 1883 and May 1884 from the pen of an Anglo-Indian, J. S. Keay, under the title of "The Spoliation of India." Keay became a Radical M.P. in 1889.

² Cf. *Bombay Gazette*, August 10, 1885, for the letter signed "English Elector" containing a plan which the element then constructing the Indian National Congress sought to adopt: "Great public meetings should be addressed: among the masses there is deep sympathy with India, and an appeal on her behalf is sure to meet with a hearty and generous response. After the example of the Cobden Club, pamphlets and leaflets should also be distributed in large numbers, giving brief but practical answers from the Indian point of view, to the practical questions of the day . . . Why does India prefer English to Russian rule? What is our interest in Central Asia? Is the Indian Council a benefit to India or the reverse? . . . What are the aspirations of her educated classes? What are the causes which impede her material progress? . . ."

³ Cf. *India's Interest in the British Ballot Box*, p. ix. "So far as India is concerned the emergency is great. During the interregnum of power enjoyed by the Conservatives . . . there seems every likelihood that, in India at least, the hands of the clock will be put back, military expenditure will be increased, all the bad and none of the good features of Lord Lytton's viceroyalty will be repeated." One of Churchill's reasons for impeaching the Ripon Administration had, in fact, been its military reductions.

sibility of any sort or kind for that policy, and I hold up that Viceroyalty and the Government which adopted it, to the censure and the condemnation of the British and Indian peoples. . . .”

Yet though the notorious Churchill speech made a seven days’ wonder, it could hardly be said to have had a more perceptible effect on the final English pollings of November 1885 than the grave warning addressed to the Indian Civil Service just previously by a prominent “advanced Liberal.”¹

“It is a new thing,” the Rt. Hon. G. O. Trevelyan had told the Eighty Club, “and one most deeply to be regretted that party politics should hold a very general sway in the Indian Civil Service. In the old days of that service men were comparatively indifferent to party politics, for the most honourable of reasons, because all their attention and interest was concentrated on the work of Indian administration. But of late there has been an organised attempt to make Conservative opinions fashionable and prevalent in the Indian Civil Service, just as they are in certain bodies and corporations at home. . . . But we cannot afford to have party politics dominant in the Indian Civil Service, and least of all a form of politics not held by the majority of our countrymen at home, and not in favour with that portion of the Native population which interests itself in the proceedings of Parliament. . . .”

Inevitably British domestic issues, social and political, dominated the contest increasingly as polling day drew nearer. So far as any Imperial issue continued to weigh with the electorate it was not the Ripon reforms but the “desertion of General Gordon,” and an examination of election speeches would show that laudatory Radical references to the success of the Ripon policy² declined rapidly as it became an older story. Yet native India was to find that, though its hopes of what might be done by direct appeals to the British masses had been exaggerated, the Radical M.P. issuing from the confused and often parochial hubbub of election procedure was generally a sincere and useful ally. Despite

¹ Quoted from Digby, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

² Cf. Channing’s *Memories of Midland Politics*, p. 17, for how unsatisfactory from the Indian point of view even Radical references tended to be when made to meetings which were primarily interested in English topics. Channing, a sincere enough Radical, had to content himself in 1885 with a mere clap-trap passage at the end of a speech: “The Tories were angry because they cannot get what they wanted—war with Russia. War would have come in 1878 but for the cool head of Lord Derby. . . . They would give it us now if the people were fools enough to place power in their hands. Would the electors not prefer a policy like that of Lord Ripon and Lord Hartington, to whom they owed it that we had at our back a loyal and energetic India, and a not unfriendly Afghanistan on our flanks. . . .?”

interested mockery from an Anglo-India fast rising to the brazen Imperialism of the Kipling-Curzon age,¹ it was the "babu prompted" question of the "touring Radical M.P." which was often destined to reveal the weakest points in the vast bureaucratic machine of Indian administration. And when Bradlaugh, coming out to address the fifth Indian National Congress of December 1889, agreed to take charge of its Bill for making the Indian Legislative Council representative and elective, an even more fruitful collaboration between the Radicalisms of Britain and India had begun.²

It is impossible to complete even the briefest survey of "advanced" opinion on India without some reference to the continuous check it exercised on the grosser forms of Anglo-Indian militarism. Cobden's biting attack on the Burmese War of 1852; the *Morning Star's* exposure of the dreadful brutalities of 1857; and the Radicals' part in securing the survival of Afghan independence after 1878 have all been noticed in previous chapters. It is perhaps worth closing this account with a final glance at a particularly characteristic piece of Radical opposition to the abuse of British military power in India.

During the brief Tory interregnum between June 1885 and January 1886 the venturesome and not very scrupulous Lord Randolph Churchill was, as has been seen, in charge of the India Office. Utilising the grievance of an over-heavy fine imposed upon a British company operating in Burma, Churchill conceived no less a design than ending Burmese independence. The Burmese Court, it is true, had given all the trouble it had dared since the British annexations of 1852-3, and the appearance of France as a neighbour in Indo-China had added to the Burmese power of

¹ Cf. Romain Rolland's *Prophets of the New India*, p. 73 note. This work, which makes an absorbing study of spiritual sides of native India ignored by the Administration, has the following severe judgement: "The recent blunders of the Indian Government and the legitimate desire of India to free herself from it, the spirit of brutal and narrow pride of which Lord Curzon as Viceroy was the most striking type, and the spirit of narrow and vainglorious incomprehension reflected in literature in the works of Kipling, ought not to allow the moral debt which India owes to the British administration to be forgotten. . . . Ram Mohun Roy would never have been able to make headway against the violence of fanatical Brahmins nor to realise certain of his most pressing social reforms without the friendship and support of the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck. . . ."

² *The Champion of Liberty*, the Bradlaugh Centenary Volume of 1933, reprints Bradlaugh's Address to the Congress, pp. 260-5. For an 1890 speech to his Northampton constituents on the India Bill see *Ibid.*, pp. 265-70.

pin pricking.¹ Yet there was no crisis justifying extraordinary action by the India Secretary of a minority Government, and the fact that Parliament was in prorogation and awaiting dissolution made the taking of irretrievable steps even more blameworthy.

There would therefore in any case have been Radical attempts to censure Lord Randolph's swashbuckling with the Indian Army and Taxes. But when the India Secretary's expedition to enforce a Protectorate upon Burma met with surprisingly little initial resistance, his ideas began to assume a grander sweep and he pressed for annexation as the easiest way to deal with the situation. His insistence, moreover, was such that he overbore both the Calcutta Council and the Prime Minister and was permitted to announce the annexation on New Year's Day 1886.²

Among the "advanced Liberal" members of Parliament just elected there was bitter indignation at the whole course which had been followed in regard to Burma. The issue of a decree of annexation by a doomed Government, heavily defeated at the polls, brought their anger to boiling-point. For a few days it seemed that the battleground on which the Tory Ministry would be brought down would be Burmese, and Gladstone's acid criticism of the Tory proceedings appeared to add to the likelihood.³ Yet as a "practical statesman" Gladstone probably did wisely in counselling the Radicals to content themselves with protests on the Burma issue and to choose another ground, freer from international and Imperial entanglements, for their decisive trial of strength with the Government. Doubtless he had already decided, in view of the surprising paucity of the initial Burmese resistance, that any attempt to undo the annexation was impossible. He knew from experience that it needed Afghan disasters or a Majuba to help even the most willing Government to face the troubles and dangers involved in ordering a "hauling down of the Union Jack."

¹ Winston Churchill's *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, i, 520-1, for a very filial account of the situation: "French influence was rapidly becoming predominant and ousting British interests, both diplomatic and commercial. Banks, railways, mining and timber concessions were falling almost daily into their hands. . . ."

² His son's *Life* admits (i, 524) that "many important authorities preferred the establishment of a native prince under British advice. Lord Salisbury thought that the great cost of British administration would overweight the new territory."

³ *Hansard*, January 25, 1886, for the strong remarks which Gladstone permitted himself even in full Parliament.

Radical indignation at what had been done in Burma was nevertheless strong enough to survive the fall of the Government responsible. Plied though they were with the arguments of the "practical," a Radical group made another effort to revoke the irrevocable. When the Indian Estimates came up for discussion on February 22nd it was resolved to divide even against the Gladstone Government.¹ Eighty-two votes were registered against the 297 of the Government and Tories combined. If King Theebaw's record had been less blood-stained, or if it had been foreseen that a sullen Burmese resistance would continue for years, the Radical figures would have been better.

¹ The *Leeds Mercury's* summary of the debate puts the Radical objections in succinct form. Professor W. A. Hunter (M.P., Aberdeen City N.), who moved the Radical amendment, is summarised thus: "The people of India had not asked for the annexation, and both the war and the annexation were universally condemned by the Indian Press. The people who had clamoured for it were the Chambers of Commerce in this country." The summary of the seconder's speech runs: "The annexation of Burma was an act of high-handed dealing and criminal folly. He was very sorry therefore that the present Government had adopted the policy of their predecessors." The next Radical speaker (L. Maciver, M.P., Torquay) "condemned the war from beginning to end, declaring that there was a perfect national sentiment in Burma and that the nation did not desire British rule. The deposition of the king was a tampering with the central idea of the religious system of Burma. . . ."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

"In the large towns . . . the Poor Law, the Education Acts, and the Municipal Acts are administered by three separate authorities. If they were placed under one body, not only would there be a great simplification, an invaluable utilising of energies now often unprofitably dissipated, but the governing body itself would gain appreciably in dignity and importance. The same confusion exists in an aggravated form in urban districts, where the principal authorities are local boards, and where there are in many cases separate rating authorities for highways, burial purposes, health, school boards, poor law and other objects. But the most grievous defects of our present system are to be found in the rural districts, where local government properly so-called hardly exists at all, where a restricted franchise and artificial method of voting are added to the evils of complicated jurisdictions and divided responsibility, and where the paramount authority—that of the Quarter Sessions—has no representative character. . . ."

"The Radical Programme," *pp.* 292-4.

"County Boards and Fancy Franchises—

"It is certain that the question of local government will occupy much of the attention of Parliament during the approaching Session; and, if we may judge from the tone of a speech delivered the other day by Mr. Walter Long, Secretary of the Local Government Board, the subject is likely to give rise to a good deal of rather vehement controversy. Mr. Long could not, of course, say anything very definite about the plan of the Cabinet; but he indicated pretty distinctly that it will not be based on the principle of 'one man, one vote.' . . . If they carry out what seems to be their intention, they will put themselves in a position of much difficulty. . . ."

The friendly "Graphic" (December 18, 1886) warns the Salisbury Government.

EARLIER in this book it was mentioned that Milner Gibson, taking up for the Radicals an agitation for elected County Boards, had after years of effort secured promises of Government attention during the 1853 Session.¹ There were still no elected County authorities, however, even in 1885, and the creation of representative County Councils to levy rates and to expend them in place of the nominated J.P.s sitting for life and subject to a property qualification² was naturally a foremost Radical demand at the 1885 elections.³

That there should still have been no trace of "democracy" in the county management of 1885 was mainly due to the objections and difficulties which the country squires, so powerfully represented on the Whig and Tory benches in the House of Commons, had raised against every successive scheme. They urged, for example, and not altogether untruly, that the cry for county councils did not arise spontaneously from the countryside. They demanded security that any scheme of representation should not leave them exposed to confiscatory rate demands based on the "over-valuation" of their mansions, landed property and sporting rights by democratically controlled assessment committees.⁴ And finally they affected to fear the "extravagance" with the rates which might be undertaken by labourer-controlled councils on the one hand and, on the other, the grinding parsimony, say with bridge or asylum accounts, that would be attempted by Councils manned by small farmers and village tradesmen.⁵

The squires, too, were determined not to cede their control over the county police forces to democratically elected Councillors, who might be unable or unwilling at critical moments to order strong police measures in "defence of property" against "riotous mobs" of their constituents. And the squires were also on the defensive in advance against suggestions, that were already being

¹ *Supra*, p. 15; *English Radicalism, 1832-1852*, pp. 387-9.

² Cf. *Local Administration*, by Rathbone, Pell, and Montague (1885), p. 22. "The justices are chosen by the Crown from the persons recommended by the Lord-Lieutenant. Their property qualification may be either an estate in possession of £100 a year, or an estate in reversion of £300 a year or two years' assessment to the inhabited house duty at £100 a year."

³ Cf. *The Radical Programme* (1885), p. 295.

⁴ *Local Government and Taxation in the United Kingdom* (ed. 1882), p. 53, for existing conditions where "county magistrates have been known to support each other on assessment committees in rating splendid mansions at preposterously low valuations."

⁵ Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 52.

made, of allowing the representative County Councils of the future, once they had established themselves, to take over further powers. The liquor-licensing power was the one which, thanks to the huge volume of temperance agitation, seemed most likely sooner or later to come under the supervision of the County Councils,¹ and there had long been Radical suggestions of replacing class-biassed benches, ignorant of the law, by paid professional lawyers.² Many country gentlemen, indeed, were so convinced that "democratic" County Councils would be mere tools for Radicalising the countryside that they expected their establishment to be promptly followed by an "overwhelming" demand for the abolition of the County Benches. They knew that a Radical alternative had long been ready—the appointment, perhaps on the "democratic" nomination of the County Councils, of stipendiary magistrates, each stipendiary to undertake the work of a number of the old Petty Sessional Divisions in circuit.

There was enough voting strength in Parliament behind the Justices' cause to make every Government wary. And, truth to tell, there was also an excellent debating case for those Justices' defenders who contended that in financial management the Benches were at once purer and more open-handed than the great majority of the shopkeeper-dominated bodies that issued from existing systems of local government election.³ The Town Councils, for example, except in the minority of instances where an informed and vigilant town opinion had been created, were notoriously the

¹ It was not hard to find work in this sphere for the County Councils, whether a Local Option Bill was carried or not. Most Temperance men would have trusted County Councils much more than the Benches for operating a Local Option Bill—i.e. receiving the preliminary petitions and examining them, authorising a local poll and declaring the result. Then, pending the obtaining of such a Local Option Bill, the Temperance men had some hopes of using the County Councils as Courts of Appeal against "over-liberal" liquor-licensing by the J.P.s.

² This had been the project urged by Hume and other Radicals in the 1830's, and every time a local Bench enacted a piece of folly or tyranny *Reynolds's* and the *Weekly Dispatch* could be trusted to rail at the "Great Unpaid" in general and to revive the project of abolishing them altogether. There was some support for the notion from the "advanced" of the legal fraternity, partly perhaps because of the new posts that it might have opened to them, but partly also because of the gross errors sometimes committed by local Benches.

³ Cf. The Cobden Club's *Local Government and Local Taxation in the U.K.* (ed. 1882), p. 52, for the conclusion that "notwithstanding that economy is both the boast and reproach of local elective boards, it must be conceded that, in this respect, they have much to learn from the non-elective magistrates who manage county finance." This perhaps explains the scanty opposition to the vast increase of their highway powers in 1878 when disturnpiked main roads forced an issue.

scene of selfish bargaining for profit and patronage between the shopkeeper factions that controlled them,¹ and the position inside the thirty-eight elected Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards seemed worse. Radicals and Ultra-Radicals might argue that this was only because the high "property" qualifications² demanded by the Municipal Reform Act of 1835 and the Metropolis Local Management Act of 1855 put a virtual monopoly of Town Council and Vestry place into the hands of the corruptest shopkeeping class in the world.³ They might assert that if the doors to Town and Vestry Halls were opened to working-class leaders by the abolition of high rating qualifications there would instantly be more purity within. And finally they might claim in regard to Boards of Guardians, Local (Sanitary) Boards, and School Boards also, that only the introduction of complete democracy could end the jobbery and cheeseparing which were their bane. But the classes which had insisted on high rating qualifications, plural or cumulative voting, and no vote at all for the "lodger" even when he was head of a household, had done so as a dam against the flooding of local government bodies by anti-property workmen leaders, and this kind of argument carried no weight with them.

Accordingly, when in 1871 the first Gladstone Government had approached Local Government Reform from so incontrovertibly "practical" an angle as the advisability of producing one consolidated and uniformly assessed rating demand on the ratepayer instead of the flood of separate demands for County Rate, Poor Rate, School Board Rate, Highway Rate, and Local Sanitary Rate,⁴ it showed what was apparently ample regard for the sus-

¹ Cf. The Cobden Club's *Local Government and Local Taxation in the U.K.* (ed. 1882), p. 51, for "the more or less extensive prevalence of corruption in that subtler form known in America as 'log-rolling'."

² The term covered rating qualifications also. *Infra*, p. 387, n. 2.

³ Its food-adulteration especially became scandalous enough to force the enactment of what was regarded as the relatively severe Food Adulteration Act of 1872.

⁴ There must have been some parishes with more ratings even than this, e.g. Prevention of Flood Ratings in the Fens, and Lighting and Watching Ratings in those parishes which had obtained power to light their streets. In the early 80's Goschen, who had been responsible for the 1871 Bill, was still saying: "Everyone knows that the first reform needed is to consolidate all rates and to have one demand-note for all rates, and a single authority for levying the rate and distributing the proceeds. . . . Let me give you my personal experience. I myself received in one year 87 demand-notes on an aggregate valuation of about £1,100. One parish alone sent me eight rate-papers for an aggregate amount of 12s. 4d. The intricacies of imperial finance are simplicity itself compared with this local financial chaos" (p. 126 *Local Government and Taxation in the U.K.*).

ceptibilities of the squires. In the new rating improvements an important part was to be played by elected Parochial Boards, but only the chairmen of these Parochial Boards with a £40 rating qualification were entitled to elect from among themselves by petty sessional divisions a number to sit with an equal number of J.P.s as a County Board. Yet the complex confusion of local government was such that this scheme of 1871 miscarried. So did another scheme of 1878, this time from a Conservative Government which would have made up County Boards by associating with the magistrates' representatives an equal number of ratepayer representatives chosen by the Boards of Guardians from among those with the Guardian's rating qualification.¹

But though the "practical" County Government Reform schemes of the 1870's were still being drawn up on essentially undemocratic lines; though the suggested County Boards were still being crammed with nominees of the J.P.s, and ratepayer representation was still being "property weighted" by rating qualifications and the like, there was a marked change of atmosphere during the 1880's. This was, of course, largely due to the stronger and more aggressive Radicalism of the Chamberlain School which, as early as 1882, committed the Whigs of the Gladstone Cabinet to "Elected County Governments." And the Radical task was the easier in view of the previous Tory surrender on the towns, marked by the 1880 Act abolishing Town Councillors' "property" qualifications and making mere householders eligible.²

That there seemed better prospects of democratising County Government in the 1880's was, however, also due to a new strategy on the part of the Conservatives. During the Beaconsfield régime landlords, by acting as the mouthpieces of farming distress, had foisted quite considerable burdens from off the rates upon the Exchequer.³ Many of them, however, had long had in view

¹ This varied from £15 to £40 annual rateable value according to the Local Government Board's estimate of a Poor Law area's wealth.

² The old qualifications of £1,000 property or occupation of £30 annual rateable value in larger boroughs, and of £500 property or occupation of £15 annual rateable value in smaller boroughs were henceforth confined to non-resident ratepayers living more than seven and less than fifteen miles distant.

³ Cf. *Hansard*, March 28, 1881, for Gladstone's reproach: "For the last six years we have gone on shovelling out large sums of money to no result, and upon no system, except to quell for a moment the appetite which grew with what it fed upon. £2,000,000 from the public taxes was given away by the last Parliament." He was speaking in a debate on a motion from the "landed interest" which aimed at transferring the cost of main roads from the rates to the Exchequer. According to Gladstone the total transfer of Local Prisons and

the even more alluring possibilities which would come from requiring "personal property" to share with land and houses assessability to the Local Rates. To keep farmers true to the very specious arguments advanceable for this thesis¹ and deaf to Radical counter-arguments on the virtual freedom of British landowners from the Land Taxation,² which was so marked a feature of many other fiscal systems, it often seemed worth while to sacrifice any remaining doubts on the wisdom of throwing County Council entry completely open. Some consideration was even given to the notion of "dishing the Radicals" and their hopes of winning farmers through offers of Fixity of Tenure and Fair Rent Courts, by counter-offering landlord readiness to pay half the rates direct. Did not the current political economy teach anyhow that even when rates were wholly paid by the farmer, as in England, they were in net effect deductions from rent and so ultimately paid in entirety by the landlord?³

If even Conservative opinion was thus prepared by 1885 to look upon "elected County Governments" as inevitable, it had certainly not yet prepared itself for the necessity of sacrificing all the "normal safeguards" of the past.⁴ When Unions of Parishes for Poor Relief had been created in 1834, Whigs and Tories had easily overborne Radical opposition to the £15 to £40 rating

the partial transfer of County Police Forces and County Asylums which had been affected since 1874, was already costing the Exchequer two millions per annum. Moreover, the local pull for extra expense tended to mount as soon as the costs, or part of them, could be put upon the Exchequer.

¹ As that "personal property" gained much more from police protection than land or houses; that non-ratepaying lodgers often used the roads much more than large ratepayers, etc., etc.

² The Radical case was that historically landowners had held the land, burdened by the duty of doing military service and of finding, often in vexatious ways, a large part of the revenue of the Crown. They had been allowed to slip off both these responsibilities in the past and to pile them except for the ludicrously low Land Tax upon the shoulders of the general taxpayer. Now they were attempting to repeat the manœuvre in the sphere of local taxation.

³ The representatives of the "landed interest" on the Select Committee on Local Taxation obtained by Mr. Goschen in February 1870 had already accepted a Report containing the following conclusions: "That in many cases the burden of the rates, which are directly paid by the occupier, falls ultimately either in part or wholly upon the owner"; "that it is expedient to make owners as well as occupiers directly liable for a certain portion of the rates." . . . Cf. *Local Government and Taxation in the U.K.*, pp. 496-502.

⁴ *Hansard*, June 7-July 19, 1888, dealing with the strenuously fought Committee stages of the Local Government Bill, furnishes ample proof of this. Thus on June 15th the proposed County Councils were refused police control in a division of 264-218 and Sunday-closing powers, at first contemplated by the Conservative Ministers themselves, were successfully withdrawn on June 28th in a division of 275-213.

qualification for Guardians and a system of voting which graded Suffrage rights among the ratepayers on a scale from one vote to twelve. Even in 1848 when the Public Health Act made provision for the erection of Local Sanitary Boards in the areas that from 1875 came to be known as urban and rural districts,¹ the same scale of qualification and voting power had been successfully imposed. Parish elections, too, whether for the ancient parish officers like churchwardens and overseers or the more modern Highway and Burial Boards, were conducted on a plural voting system which allowed the larger ratepayer up to six times the voting power of the smaller. The Conservatives of 1885 might admit that the imposition *de novo* of "safeguards" of this magnitude had become impossible, but some checks on "democratic abuses" they were seeking nevertheless for insertion into the inevitable County Government Bill. Radicals, on the other hand, were determined not only that County Government should be made fully democratic but that the occasion should also be used for democratising the government of Parish, District, and Union. And by democratisation they meant more than the establishment of perfect equality among the ratepayers, large and small. They meant also the grant of local government equality to the millions of heads of families who, as "compound householders" or "lodgers," had been placed under disabilities, partial or total, because they did not pay their rates direct but through the rent.²

It is interesting to find that democratic pressure on the existing property-weighted system of government in the countryside sometimes came from the rural proletariat itself, and not merely from the Parliamentary Radicals and the leaders of the urban masses. Some particularly good examples of this may be found among the agricultural labourers of Norfolk who rallied so strongly to the new hope that seemed coming to them in the 1870's from Labourers' Trade Unions.³ There is an account, for instance, of how the labourers and some of the Dissenting tradesmen of Swanton Morley in Norfolk, dissatisfied with the management of the parochial charities by the Rector, attempted to win control

¹ The Public Health and Local Government Act of 1875 (38 & 39 Vict., cap. 55) adopted this useful nomenclature.

² Compound householders were indirectly recognised by statute as quasi-ratepayers, but ratepayer-rights were in practice not always obtained.

³ L. M. Springall's *Labouring Life in Norfolk Villages 1834-1914* for the 14,000 members once in the National Agricultural Labourers' Union alone.

of the Vestry despite the Rector's legal position as *ex-officio* Chairman and the plural-voting system which gave such advantages to his "respectable" supporters. Asserting their right to be present and to vote under the Parochial Rate Assessment Act of 1869 which, it was urged, recognised householders as such even if they were not direct ratepayers, the rural democrats of Swanton Morley sacrificed some working-time in order to attend a Vestry that had been called, as usual, at an hour unadapted for the labouring man. As the churchwardens could claim some part in the administration of practical charities, these village Radicals had determined that a better showing should be made with the running of a popular candidate for people's warden in 1876 than had been permitted in 1875. The trouble with the Rector that followed at the Vestry Meeting is vividly pictured below in a participant's own words:¹

At the Easter Vestry Meetings in March 1875, we tryed by Every means to conciliate him and Get him to admit the Labourers rite to attend the vestry meetings but he raved and stormed and drove a Labourer and *bona fide* householder from the meeting under threats of having him taken into custody I kindly offered to hand him the Act of Parliament that gave all Householders the power and rite to a seat vote and voice in A Parish vestry meeting but the angry rector would not hear reason, but unlawfully deprived the Poor man of exercising his Just and Lawfull rites, this gave rise to Litigation that had the effect of teaching the Rector the unsoundness of his parish law, and was the sole cause of 60 Stalwart Labourers besides 15 or 16 Tradesmen attending the vestry meeting to assert these rites on April 17 1876, and had the show of hands been fairly and honestly taken Hubbard would have been saved the trouble of demanding a Poll, but finding it impossible to get Justice in the matter of a show of hands, Hubbard under my advice demanded a Poll, and the Rector in A most offensive manner demanded Hubbard to pay down 5 pounds before he would grant a Poll . . . I asked the Chairman to allow me to put A Question . . . but I was abruptly ordered by the Rector to hold my tongue under peril of being Ejected from the meeting, finding remonstrance vain I asked Hubbard to go and fetch money, and the hitherto unreasonable rector looked highly pleased when the 5 sovereigns were handed over to him, and for fear of imposition rung them one by one on the table to the great joy of his supporters, I intimated that he might have the pleasure of Paying them again and receive a derisive laugh but on Thursday, Janry 18th 1877, Judge Price said back they should be paid with all Expenses. . . . The rector is confident we shall never be Churchwardens we would reply dont be too sure, remember what have already taken place, all things are more or less uncertain in this day of unionism and desenting Agitators. . . .

¹ L. M. Springall's *Labouring Life in Norfolk Villages 1834-1914*.

Local Government

It is not surprising to hear that, encouraged by the Court decision mentioned above and the *English Labourers' Chronicle*,¹ Dissenting tradesmen and unionised labourers arranged to stage many more contests at the Easter Vestries of 1877. And if their efforts in this and subsequent years were nearly always overborne by the plural votes, up to six, allowed to the larger occupiers of the parish, this only tended to give villagers a much warmer interest than usual in urban Radical propaganda for the complete democratisation of local government. In fact, it probably helped the villager to no little extent in ultimately obtaining democratic parish, district, and county government that his problem could not be entirely separated from that of the Ultra-Radical London working man, whose strong democratic predilections no Cabinet for generations had dared to ignore. Thus the fact, that under the Metropolis Local Management Act of 1855 all the London parishes had obtained equal Householder Suffrage and the abolition of plural voting, was a most valuable precedent citable on behalf of the villager, and the more so because the functions and expenditure of the London parishes were so much greater than those of any others in the country. On the Conservative argument these parishes should have obtained an even greater amount of Plural Suffrage in 1855 in order to allow their "property" to protect itself against the increased possibility of rating victimisation which had been thrown open. But instead Plural Suffrage had been abandoned.

The very relics of the special "property" safeguards, which had been allowed in the 1855 Act at all, actually proved to be a dangerous irritant provoking the London parish democracies to frequent turmoil. Thus clerical *ex-officio* Chairmen of the elected Vestries inevitably became the target of Radical attack wherever there was such a predisposing cause as the survival of a Church impost.² And sometimes mere Rectorial ineptitude for the very delicate functions of guiding an often suspicious body through contentious business³ proved the starting-point of Radical crusades

¹ The organ of Joseph Arch's National Agricultural Labourers' Union. Its circulation, though somewhat fallen from its peak, was still high.

² Cf. F. W. Soutter's *Recollections of a Labour Pioneer*, Chapter 3, for the feeling in St. Saviour's, Southwark, against a Church Rate that had survived the 1868 Act and the similar feeling in Bermondsey against a "Rector's rate." Thanks to Soutter's agitation both were abandoned before 1880, but in view of later events some rancour must be deemed to have remained in the Bermondsey Rectory.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 128 sqq., for troubles in Bermondsey where "the Rector placed

for the removal of *ex-officio* Chairmen and their replacement by Chairmen chosen by the elected Vestrymen themselves.¹

It was obviously sounding the death-knell for *ex-officio* clerical Chairmen everywhere that by 1889 matters in Bermondsey had come to such a pass that the unpopular Rector-Chairman was using barricades and a score of the Vestry's scavenging staff in an attempt to keep out Radical deputations by force and was summoning the police to his assistance when this stretching of his Chairman's rights to their utmost limits proved unavailing.² And that a Vestry majority should still have been behind the Rector, thanks to another of the 1855 "safeguards," the £25 rating qualification for Vestrymen, only meant that this sin against democracy too was doomed. In such a parish as Bermondsey, for example, Radical "agitators" were well aware that less than a thousand of its twelve thousand houses were rated at £25 a year or over,³ and the figures for Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, Mile End, Whitechapel, Poplar, and Limehouse would probably have revealed an extent of householder disqualification as startling as Bermondsey's. Even the wealthier London parishes suffered from a very high disqualification rate, for the standard vestrymen qualification was actually not £25 but £40, the lower qualification only being introducible by the Local Government Board into those parishes where over five-sixths of the houses were rated at under £40.

his own interpretation upon the powers vested in the chair; he was in the habit, too, of conveying unpleasant dicta in tones calculated to provoke the meekest of men."

¹ It should, perhaps, be noted that where the incumbent was absent or did not choose to act, the senior Churchwarden might claim the Chairmanship. Both Churchwardens, too, could claim *ex-officio* membership of the vestry.

² F. W. Soutter, *op. cit.*, Chapter 7, for the arrest of two of the deputation and the exciting Police Court and Sessions scenes which followed. "On the appointed day," says Soutter, "we were escorted to court by a large crowd of sympathisers, and for the eight succeeding Thursdays the old Southwark Police Court became the scene of long-drawn discussions of the question as to whether the Rector, in conjunction with his Churchwardens, could by violent means prevent the attendance of ratepayers at a meeting of the vestry to which they had been duly invited by the Vestry clerk. . . . Delegates from all parts of the Metropolis sat upon our (defence) committee, and we received much valuable support from the Press. The *Star* was a particularly useful ally." The result, after the Police Court had remitted the case to the South London Sessions and a first jury had failed to agree, was that a second jury returned a verdict which only permitted a binding-over for 12 months.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 157: ". . . the only part in civic government vouchsafed to eleven out of every twelve of the householder parishioners was the finding of the money and the election from among their well-to-do neighbours of the £25 a year houses of a Vestry to spend it." For Soutter's own troubles in establishing a qualification see Chapter 8 *Ibid.*

One of the factors, not yet considered, which contributed much to making the pressure for the democratisation of local government irresistible was the steady and increasing effect of the Elementary Education Act of 1870. In a largely philanthropic wave of determination to eradicate the evils of "national ignorance," the Government had been allowed to pass legislation authorising the erection of elected School Boards whose members were subject to no property or rating qualification whatsoever, whose activities were confined within no statutory rating limit, and whose members were elected by all the ratepayers on equal terms and without the slightest Plural Suffrage.¹ Conservative acquiescence, it is true, had had to be purchased by offering such special subventions for the speedy erection of Church schools as seemed to offer every likelihood that only the exceptional area would be compelled to equip itself with a School Board or could be persuaded voluntarily to ask for one and the attendant school rate. Moreover, Forster's assurance, ludicrous in the light of after events, that he did not expect the normal school rate to exceed 3d. in the £,² the practical difficulties of fixing a maximum figure suitable to a yet unexplored situation, and, perchance, the fear that a set maximum figure would be worked to even without need by ambitious School Boards, combined to leave the School Boards without a rating maximum determined by Conservative caution.

Though the working of the Elementary Education Act in such matters as the "cumulative vote"³ was not without its unpleasant surprises for Radicals, it was Conservatives who found most reason for disquiet. For one thing, the combined vigour of Radicalism and Dissent persuaded an unexpected number even of non-urban areas to equip themselves with School Boards and Board

¹ The Government originally suggested the choice of the School Boards by the Town Councils or Vestries, themselves property-qualified or property-weighted. The more democratic system represents a concession made to Radicals on the Committee stage to reduce their protests against the pro-Church clauses.

² Cf. H. Holman, *English National Education*, p. 184.

³ Cf. John Morley's *Struggle for National Education*, p. 46: "In consequence of the action of the cumulative vote, the Boards are often filled with eager sectarian representatives, who attend to push or guard the interests of this or that religious faction, rather than to co-operate in the largest and most free spirit in one of the greatest of public works." The cumulative vote, which allowed all an elector's seven votes for a seven-member Board, for example, to be thrown for one candidate, was speedily found to tell in favour of clerical candidates, cumulatively voted for by their congregations. Yet these clerical candidates were often mainly concerned in preventing the erection of Board Schools which were alleged to be "unnecessary" in view of the existence of Church Schools nearby.

Schools despite all that Anglicanism and Conservatism could do in urging the needlessness of thus burdening themselves with what would certainly be a heavy School Rate when "sufficient" voluntary school accommodation existed or could be provided.¹ But worse than this proved to be the alleged extravagance and total disregard of the "legitimate interests of Church schools" charged upon some of the greatest School Boards in the country led by that of London. In 1876, therefore, came not merely a

¹ *Full Report of the Great Meeting of Ratepayers on December 24, 1873, to consider the formation of a School Board for the Parish of Stanhope, etc.*, pp. 32, gives a vivid picture of what occurred in this large Durham parish with a population of 10,330 at the 1871 census, and the picture must serve for all. The leader of the agitation for a School Board was a vigorous Primitive Methodist minister who at the parochial meeting, where he successfully carried his School Board resolution, was able to make great play with a recent Inspectorial report alleging a deficiency of school places. Arguing against the acceptance of the Church party's offer of raising £2,000 for finding the extra accommodation needed in "voluntary schools," he said: "I hold that it would be better for us to refuse their aid, to get schools of our own, to pay for them, and to manage them ourselves. (Loud cheers.) And I will tell you why! Because in the first place, the schools they get, assuming they get them without appealing to the ratepayer for a voluntary rate, will be in their own hands, and I ask you to consider this. How are the schools kept up after they are got? What supports them? Are they not supported by the school pence and the Government grant? . . . Directly and indirectly you build those schools and support them after they are built . . . a denominational schoolmaster is employed not because of his capacity to teach secular knowledge, but because of his adherence to the Established Church . . . and I will give any gentleman a few copies of the *Church Times* in order to show him that when they advertise for a schoolmaster, his engagement does not so much depend upon his being able to impart adequate secular knowledge, as his willingness to fill the place of clerk, sexton, or some other office under the clergyman (Laughter and applause). . . ."

The leading speaker for the Church party, which was opposing the application for a School Board, spoke as follows:

"I will show you that it (a School Board) may cost something. First of all, a School Board must be elected. You cannot do that for nothing. In the next place a School Board must have an office. . . . In the next place I don't think you will find any Board man, after he has attended a meeting and transacted the business before it, who will sit down and write up all the correspondence and books of the Board. . . . As to the cost of the building, you would not build these schools under £7,000. It might exceed that and go to £10,000. . . . Then if you are going to put into force this compulsory clause, you must have an officer and where he finds children who do not go to school, you must prosecute the parents. . . . Now as to whether the Bible should or should not be read in these schools . . . I would have the Bible read in every school in the land. (Applause.) And I will tell you why. Mr. Gilmore says leave it to the parents, leave it to the Sunday School and to the Churches. Yes, if all the parents were religious that might do. But how about those parents who are not religious, who never teach their children, who never learn them a prayer or take them to any place of worship at all?"

At the School Board election 10 candidates were nominated for the seven places of whom 4 were described as Dissenters, 3 as Moderate Churchmen, and 3 as Extreme Churchmen. The 4 Dissenters were elected with 2 Moderate and 1 Extreme Churchman to form the Board. But parishes like this were commoner in Wales than England.

Conservative Government's Education Act helping Church schools in sundry ways to meet Board School opposition and even permitting the winding-up of the smaller School Boards,¹ but a most determined attempt to eject the London School Board majority by the use of every possible means of attack. In most large towns,² in fact, and in numbers of rural areas³ also, School Board elections were tending to become much more absorbing than any other local elections whatsoever. And the fact that they were democratically conducted, without Property or Rating Qualification for members or Plural Suffrage for Voters, virtually assured the speedy triumph of the same electoral principles over the whole sphere of Local Government.

One particularly important result of the School Board precedent concerned the government of London. By 1880 the London School Board had admittedly achieved a remarkable measure of administrative success, and all the hesitations of those who had considered its task too vast and complex for one body had been thoroughly falsified. The very size of its jurisdiction had, in fact, made its membership a coveted distinction; had won the devoted services

¹ Cf. *Hansard*, July 20 and 21, 1876, for strong Liberal and Radical opposition in Committee, repeated on July 24th and 27th. The Government found it necessary to offer some safeguards against abuse.

² Cf. *Liberator*, December 1, 1876: "London and some of the large provincial towns have just been the scene of severely contested School Board elections. . . . If the excitement occasioned, and the energy called forth . . . betokened only interest in the cause of education, there would be ground for unmixed congratulation. . . . Clergymen of the Establishment eagerly seek for seats, and, as a consequence, Dissenting ministers are put forward to frustrate their designs. The questions discussed by the candidates and their supporters are, not How can every poor child be brought into a good and efficient school? . . . It is quite another class of topics which excite the keenest interest and the most angry controversy. How will existing denominational schools be affected by the opening of Board Schools? How can the former retain their scholars . . . if they have to compete with schools occupying better buildings, with superior appliances . . . ? Will the supporters . . . of denominational schools continue their support . . . when they have to pay school-rates as well as subscriptions . . . ? And will not the Established clergy lose much of their power if they no longer have the largest share of the educational work of the country in their hands? . . . Yes! it is unhappily an ecclesiastical war which is raging in the form of an educational conflict. The cry about economy is as hollow a cry as ever came from the lips of those who have to conceal a bad purpose beneath a plausible exterior. . . ."

³ This was especially the case in Wales, where every opening was seized to use the rates to free Dissenters from dependence on Church schools. Cf. *The National Church*, January 1874: "School Boards exist in many parts of Wales where Dissent flourishes, solely in expectation that, while too poor to build chapels at their own risk, they may obtain their ends by securing a school out of the ratepayers' pockets." This was after the St. David's Baptists were found to have been allowed the use of the Board School on Sundays by a Board whose "every member" was a Nonconformist.

of outstanding national figures; and had permitted them to take altogether wider educational views in regard to building, equipment, and staffing than would have been possible to the ten separate Boards that were at one time being considered.¹

The School Board argument became, therefore, quite a favourite one with the London professional-class Radicals demanding the setting-up of a Municipality of Greater London. How a properly empowered London Municipality would introduce uniform standards into the varying road, health, and lighting services of London's 23 Vestries and 15 District Boards; how it would standardise the work of London's 30 Boards of Guardians on the best and humanest models and do the poorer districts greater justice by making the whole Metropolis the unit for Poor Relief rating; how it would bring to reason London's eight water and four gas companies who had hitherto been able to defeat the Vestries and "influence" the Metropolitan Board of Works²—all these things were being optimistically projected. Nay, the control of the Metropolitan Police was being forecast for one Committee; the very important functions that had been accumulated by the Metropolitan Board of Works for a second; and the work of the London School Board for a third. Londoners, it was claimed, were as much entitled to the control of the police they paid for as the people of Birmingham or Leeds; the Metropolitan Board of Works was not representative of the people of London in any true sense of the word;³ and to delegate the educational work of the capital to a Municipality Committee, specially reinforced, perhaps, by co-opted members of School Board experience and other educational experts, would stop the dangerous multiplication of local government elections and concentrate responsibility in a way peculiarly helpful to the electors.

There was one special driving force behind all the energetic effort that was thrown for decades behind these ambitious plans of metropolitan integration—determination to defeat the wiles

¹ *Local Government and Taxation in the United Kingdom*, pp. 213-20, for London School Board section.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 147-269, for J. F. B. Firth, M.P.'s, remarkable contribution on "London Government and how to Reform it." Firth was Radical co-member with Dilke for Chelsea.

³ Members were not directly elected by the public but by the Vestries and the District Boards, and these themselves owing to the scanty public interest in their work tended to be the nominees of profit- and patronage-seeking cliques. A great Municipality, it was hoped, would stimulate civic pride more than politics on the Vestry level had done.

of those City interests whose grip on vast ancient endowments and privileges, it was argued, was only kept by depriving four million Londoners of their just rights. And if projects of winning control of the Metropolitan Police for a democratically elected London Municipality enjoyed fervent Ultra-Radical support for one set of reasons¹ and those of giving the Municipality special Poor Law powers for another set of reasons,² it was yet the plan of appropriating the "misused" endowments and revenues of the City Corporation, Guilds, and parishes for the common good of all Londoners that attracted the heartiest popular applause.

Though there was no really reliable information available until 1884 of the vast income of £800,000 per annum held by the Guilds alone, there had long been growing a shrewd suspicion that the controlling City cliques commanded and misapplied immense revenues.³ Thus so politically moderate a body as the London School Board of the 1870's was moved to agitate for the removal of £160,000 per annum of endowment from the control of the City Guilds and Parishes. The School Board's inquiries had shown that this amount of income came in from old bequests, whose purposes were now so inexecutable or of such dubious value that, in other cases, the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 had provided for the transfer of the income to education.⁴ In London, however, this huge revenue was still being wasted or frittered away, largely in the attempt to confine the benefit of the funds to the shrunken population of the City or to those who could establish personal or family connexions with the Guilds. Yet on any equitable view, it was argued, the population which should have benefited from the donors' original gifts was

¹ Radical distrust of the Home Office's use of the Metropolitan Police was always being reinforced by Hyde Park and Trafalgar Square "incidents."

² The concentration of rich and poor in separate districts, and the resultant high Poor Rate in poor quarters and low Poor Rate in rich quarters, had already had to be dealt with, but much more was needed.

³ J. F. B. Firth's *Reform of London Government and of City Guilds* (1888), p. 107. Firth knew thoroughly the five volumes of the Report issued in 1884 by the Royal Commission on the City Livery Companies appointed in 1880.

⁴ *Local Government and Taxation in the U.K.* (1882), p. 220. The bequests transferable to education under this Act might be graded into three classes. There were first the quasi-educational, like those providing for the payment of poor boys' apprenticeship fees. Then there was a second class almost inexecutable under modern conditions, like those providing for the ransoming of captives. The last class consisted of bequests for purposes which were deemed of dubious general utility in modern times, the seasonal distribution of doles to the "poor," for example, and the payment of marriage portions to "deserving" girls.

not the miserable remnant of Londoners who had stayed within the City confines or the protégés of the cliques who had successfully seized power within the Guilds. It was the whole metropolitan population, which had so long been overflowing the narrow City boundaries and, of late, actually suffering expulsion to make way for those very blocks of banks, warehouses, offices, shops, and railway buildings that had permitted the total income of the twelve "great" Guilds alone to reach the colossal total of £561,000 per annum.

The School Board, in fact, had claimed the £160,000 per annum for London's elementary education and for the technical instruction also that would be needed to give the modern counterpart of the old London apprentice his proper introduction to craftsmanship. Similarly in the matter of the City trust funds for the sick and aged, the foundation of Convalescent Hospitals and the provision of open spaces available to all Londoners were urged as better uses of the money than its employment for doles to all and sundry who could allege City connexion. Nor was it only Trade Union leaders who were prepared to urge that where a modern Union and an ancient Guild bore some correspondence, there was a good case for devoting some of its sick and aged funds to the corresponding Benefit sections of the modern Union. And as for those very large funds which the Guilds did not hold in strict trust but felt quite free to apply to lavish feasting of one another, to costly entertainments of distinguished visitors, and to much varied and miscellaneous jobbery, there was a host of suggestions as to how they might be put to better use. Much of the money was authoritatively claimed for the establishment of a scholarship system, the promotion of secondary and art education, the provision of libraries, museums, and art galleries, and the foundation of working men's and working women's institutes.¹

The same forces that were attacking the existing management

¹ All these recommendations will be found either in the Report of the City Livery Companies' Commission of 1884 or the actual text of the City of London Parochial Charities Act of 1883. In regard to Guild feasting and jobbery the Livery Companies Commission found a hardly believable state of things still existing. Thus 97 Mercers with a non-trust income of £48,000 spent £4,909 in entertainment; £5,406 in salaries, and £8,766 in "Court Fees" or payments for attending meetings allowed to Guildsmen. The corresponding figures for the 150 Skinners were: Total Non-Trust income, £18,997; Entertainment, £5,602; Salaries, £2,617; "Court Fees," £2,566. Nor were these exceptional Guilds. They were "great Companies," conducted with average City decency.

of the Guild revenues were also attacking the City Corporation. A reader of *Reynolds's* or the *Weekly Despatch* hardly needed a call to battle after he had learned, say, that the Corporation had spent in a single day's entertainment of a Royal Prince a sum of £27,576 made up of items like the following: Refreshments, £5,098; Wine, £1,731; Upholstery, £4,534; Menu cards and banquet and ball tickets, £903; Badges for the Committee in the form of lockets, £300; Gloves, perfumery, and hair brushes, £145.¹ The knowledge that the wherewithal for these and similar prodigalities came to no inconsiderable extent from the City's metropolitan market monopoly² best represented by Billingsgate and Smithfield, was an additional stimulus to protest. Nor was it the only such stimulus. If London's fish and meat prices were raised by the payment of indirect toll to the City, its coal, wine, and grain prices included direct toll.

Accordingly though the "interests" in control of the City had easily been able to defeat the project of extending Municipal and Guild Reform to them in 1837; though they had inflicted a series of signal reverses on the Whig Home Secretary, Sir George Grey, who between 1856 and 1863 had attempted to take to the Statute Book some of the by no means Radical recommendations of a Royal Commission of 1853,³ fresh assaults on "City abuses" were not long delayed. How Mr. Ayrton, Radical M.P. for the Tower Hamlets, obtained two Select Committees on metropolitan government problems in 1861 and 1867; how they collected some of the material which permitted the drawing up of London Reform Bills by J. S. Mill in 1867 and 1868 and by Charles Buxton in 1869 and 1870—this and much else cannot here be dealt with. Suffice it to say that during the 1870's the movement for London Government Reform was attracting ever fresh recruits from among the Radical members of the professional classes, and that their hour seemed to be approaching when the 1880 elections so conspicuously increased Radical strength in Parliament.

The 1880 Bill, prepared by a group in which those "advanced" Parliamentarians Firth of Chelsea and Thorold Rogers of South-

¹ *Local Government and Taxation in the U.K.*, p. 172.

² Based on an Edward III Charter in the first place, which was specifically confirmed in 1638. The House of Lords proved the monopoly's best defender.

³ In 1856 Sir George Grey withdrew his Bill; in 1858 delaying tactics and "deliberately false" allegations ruined another Bill; two further Bills, each weaker than the one which had preceded it, enjoyed no happier fate. Finally an 1863 Bill was ruined on a technicality which the Home Office had overlooked.

wark were prominent, was by far the most Radical which had ever yet been suggested. The entire authority of the City, the Vestries, and the Metropolitan Board of Works was to be ceded to a new and democratically elected body representative of all London, and this was to re-entrust local administration to bodies acting in uniform fashion under its direct control.¹ This bold Bill was ready too late in the Session to go far but it was plain that the order of ideas it represented was making progress in circles likely to have weight with the Government. In 1884, indeed, a Government Bill on these lines appeared, and if its real chance of enactment was destined to be delayed by the Franchise crisis, the extraordinary facts published first by the Royal Commission on City Parochial Charities in 1881² and then by the Royal Commission on the City Livery Companies in 1884 were of a nature to warrant the belief that the more they were reflected on, the less would be the tenderness shown to the "ancient rights and customs" of the City. That a not unsatisfactory City Parochial Charities Bill should have been obtained in 1883,³ at the third attempt, certainly seemed to augur well for the bold efforts to finish with City and Guilds "abuses" that might be expected from so "Radical" a majority as that returned in December 1885.

The City, however, had been taking its own precautions ever since Radical pressure had obtained in 1883 the Government promise of a London Reform Bill for 1884. While the Guilds began devoting an increased portion of their revenues to education, the Corporation made two startling purchases of open spaces.⁴ But it was rather the City Committee, which was set up at the same time and with an apparently unlimited right of secret expenditure, that produced a situation that made the attempt to press the London Government Bill of 1884 to the Statute Book hopeless. Nearly £20,000 was spent altogether in plotting the

¹ Firth, *Reform of London Government and of City Guilds*, p. 23.

² *Report of the City Parochial Charities Commission*, 4 vols., 1881, shows that the total revenue of all the charities amounted in 1876 to £101,385 even under the existing management. Of this 1876 total, £40,811 went to ecclesiastical Charities, and £60,573 to secular. Parish after parish of the 61 involved was found ready to admit through its incumbents, churchwardens, and overseers that it was difficult to find legitimate uses for the money because "there are no resident poor now."

³ On the compromise basis that the £40,811 should go for metropolitan Church purposes and the £60,573 for secular uses of benefit to all London.

⁴ Firth, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

Local Government

break-up of London Reform meetings and in setting up bogus associations which should give Parliament the impression that what the men, say, of Lambeth, Woolwich, and Greenwich wanted was not the creation of one giant municipality, which would deprive those districts of their old individuality, but the issue of separate municipal charters to allow them to function as boroughs. Here is one indignant summary that was later made of the City's underground activities when they were in process of detection:¹

£19,550. 10s. 10d. was proved to have been expended in financing Associations such as the Metropolitan Ratepayers' Association, Metropolitan Local Self-Government Association, Anti-One Municipality League, and South London Municipal Association, described by Mr. Howell as "bogus" Associations, which were mostly started by paid agents employed by City officials, under the direction of, and with the knowledge of, the special Committee; and which Associations were used as a means of creating a fraudulent, unfair, and collusive opposition to the proposed legislation for London municipal reform. Improper use and malversation of funds were also shown in promoting and carrying on collusive and fictitious charter movements in Lambeth, Woolwich, Greenwich, and other places in the metropolis, with the view of representing these to Parliament and to the Privy Council as spontaneous and *bona-fide* movements when they were really only intended as opposition to the Government Bill. . . . Improper use was further shown in paying men to attend in very large numbers for the purpose of opposing, sometimes with violence, the meetings in favour of the reform of the Corporation; in paying for sham deputations, sham meetings in favour of the City, and for unfair reports which were published in the press, in procuring signatures to petitions. . . .

Unfortunately for the City, all this was in process of discovery by a Select Committee of the House of Commons during the spring of 1887,² when the City's late anxieties would normally have been set at rest by the great Radical split on Home Rule and the consequent tenure of power by a Conservative Government. Close upon these damning revelations, moreover, followed others connected with the Corporation's machinations in attempting to deceive Parliament into the belief that Londoners really wanted the City Corporation to have its old right of levying dues

¹ Bonner and Robertson, *Charles Bradlaugh*, ii, 375-6. Bradlaugh played an important part in the detection, and his account under the title "How the City Fathers Fight" may be read in *Our Corner* for July and August 1887.

² *Report of the Select Committee on the London Corporation (Charges of Malversation)*, Parl. Paper 161, 1887.

on London's coal and wine renewed when the existing legislation should run out in 1889. Large sums of money were spent in the effort to secure suitable petitions to Parliament, but on investigation it was found that 90,000 of the 93,000 signatures to the petitions had come through City agents. But a Select Committee of the Commons was to discover that the imposture of City agents had been even more barefaced than this. Twenty-nine petitions with 34,000 signatures were tested, and the Committee reported that they were "wholly or in great part forgeries."¹

After such revelations as these it is understandable that even a Conservative Government found it impossible to refuse the people of London their directly elected County Council in 1888 when arrangements were being made for such Councils elsewhere. And if Conservative Parliamentarians were worried about the possibility of such a Council quickly endeavouring to extend the very limited powers that had been allowed it, the City Corporation had graver cause of anxiety. Its complete failure to secure the renewal of the coal and wine dues² seemed likely to usher in a period when it would be increasingly overshadowed by the new body, representing four million Londoners, including those in the very City itself. Just as the spectre of a Socialist County Council of London, able in the future to defy or overawe Parliament, worried the Carlton Club, so such a County Council claiming the right to supervise and even control Corporation and Guild expenditure was the nightmare of the City.

A last look must be thrown upon the problems of municipal government outside London. By 1880 the greater cities were making very large use of the extensive powers that had been conferred upon them in the interests of public health by a series of statutes dating back to the Town Improvement Act of 1847 and the Public Health Act of 1848.³ The municipalisation move-

¹ *Reform of London Government and of City Guilds*, p. 18.

² The City Bill for 1888 failed to reach Committee stage and in 1889 the 52 & 53 Vict., cap. 17, abolished dues, abrogated charters, repealed Statutes, ended the coal-weighing and measuring claims of the City, and generally confounded the Corporation. The 13d. per ton on coal brought within 15 miles of St. Paul's had actually been divided between the City and the Metropolitan Board of Works in the ratio of 4 to 9, and used for road improvements. But the London Radicals wanted to make a beginning with sweeping away the "ancient rights" of the City, and in any case considered that the proper person to pay for road improvements was the ratepayer and not the often desperately poor coal consumer.

³ As by drafting compulsory building regulations, insisting on the house drains being connected with the town drainage system, reorganising the

ment, too, was well under way. Thus Joseph Chamberlain and his Radical following in Birmingham were in 1874 and 1875 able to carry out their plans for buying out Birmingham's private gas and water companies by demonstrating the municipal backwardness of Birmingham in comparison with the fifty or sixty cities headed by Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester, Belfast, Dublin, Plymouth, and Cardiff which owned their water systems and profited thereby.¹ When Chamberlain, again, managed to carry an ambitious Birmingham Improvement Scheme in 1876, based on the same principles as the Artisans' Dwellings Act of 1875, Birmingham was merely participating in a Rehousing movement occupying numbers of other municipalities also and the Metropolitan Board of Works above all. After all these authorities had had sorry experience of the vast cost and difficulty of dealing with landlords' rights and claims even under legislation specially drafted to help them, the "advanced" nature of the "Radical Programme's" chapter on "The Housing of the Poor in Towns" becomes easily understandable.² Meanwhile the principal inspirer of the "Radical Programme" had, as the President of the Board of Trade responsible for the first general Electric Lighting Act, that of 1882, endeavoured to put Town Councils in a specially favourable position to extend municipalisation to the new field of electric lighting.³

scavenging and street-cleansing services, paving, draining, and sewerage of the entire roadways of the town, appointing medical officers of health and sanitary inspectors, making special regulations for offensive trades, industrial exhalations, etc., providing parks, open spaces, baths, and washhouses, etc., etc.

¹ Cf. Garvin's *Life of Chamberlain*, i, 193, and generally J. T. Bunce, *History of the Corporation of Birmingham*, ii, 346 sqq.

² *Radical Programme* (1885), pp. 104-5, for the Metropolitan Board of Works' loss of £1,211,336 incurred by 1883. This sum represented the difference between the money paid to owners of condemned property housing 20,335 and the value of the sites after they had been prepared for decent working-class homes. Similar losses were incurred at Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Swansea, Wolverhampton, Derby, Newcastle, and Birmingham. In Edinburgh a 4d. rate was required to meet interest on the deficiency, and the same rate was required at Birmingham because of the alleged "overprice given to those whose avarice and laches have created the mischief." One of the Radical remedies, designed to stop such burdening of the rates in future, was to end the right of the owner of property in a condemned block to claim allowances for prospective value and compulsory sale. And if this would greatly reduce the capital sum paid out, a second proposal was designed to add to the income obtainable after an improvement. Owners in the district adjoining the improved site should, it was claimed, pay an improvement rate owing to the enhanced value of their properties from the removal of pestilential dens adjoining and the opening of new approaches.

³ Under the original Bill Corporations were not only to be allowed to generate and sell electricity themselves but were to have the right of buying out the private

English Radicalism 1853-1886

The most radical views held by municipal progressives, however, concerned the unification of all town services under the corporation. Only a corporation controlling the whole municipal life of the town, they claimed, could view the improvement of town life as a whole, could breed the best type of civic ambition, and create the best type of civic administration. To allow the corporation to take over the functions of the School Board and the Poor Law Guardians for exercise by specially reinforced Committees would, it was urged, concentrate civic responsibility in a way likely to prove attractive to the very able and public-spirited class of citizen hitherto repelled by the apparent pettiness of most of the issues decided in the Town Hall. If the all-responsible Town Council, too, had its method of election changed to one of triennial election for the whole Council,¹ the imagination of the more average citizen would also be captured for the Town Hall as it had never been yet, owing to his distraction by being called on to vote for three, or it might be more, authorities at different times and on merely fractional local issues. Finally, to release the Town Council from some of the more vexatious restrictions of the Borough Funds Act would be to make for wiser and more beneficial town government.²

interests allowed to step in in cases where Corporations preferred to let others do the experimenting. In Mr. Chamberlain's original Bill the private interests could have been compulsorily bought out in 7 years; that was altered to 15 years in the Commons and to 21 in the Lords.

¹ As one-third of the Town Council had to be renewed every year under the system established in 1835, a clear-cut issue could never be put to the whole town at once.

² Cf. *Local Government and Taxation in the U.K.*, pp. 313-14. Under the Borough Funds Act, the 35 & 36 Vict., cap. 91, serious restrictions were laid on the Corporation power to promote or oppose Bills in Parliament. The worst came from the requirement that the owners and ratepayers, in public meeting assembled, should approve the course proposed by the Corporation, and a numerical poll could be required. "It has often happened," says *Local Government and Taxation in the U.K.*, "that measures of importance, matured by Town Councils, and urgently needed, have been rejected by a narrow majority in a thinly attended ratepayers' meeting, or by a narrow majority on a poll which did not represent more than a fraction of the ratepayers; and this is a liability particularly likely to arise when sanitary improvements, affecting the interest of owners of small house property, are in question." Ratepayers' meetings of this kind were usually attended mainly by those who objected to the proposal in question, and the constant rejection by such meetings of proposals to adopt the Free Libraries and Museums Act had made them notorious.

SOME RADICAL DIFFICULTIES ON FOREIGN POLICY

In theory all wings of Radicalism throughout the period would have accepted as the axiom of their foreign policy hostility to wars of pure aggrandisement by the British Government and even wars of pure "diplomatic policy." But until the huge increase of Continental armies, already under way in the 1860's, began to rule out the old notions of sending tiny British expeditions, backed by fleet support, to strategic points, many kinds of European situation were apt to find Radical forces splitting into a non-interventionist wing led by Cobden, and an extreme democratic wing anxious for intervention in support of liberty and against "tyranny and oppression." It was this latter wing which, according to Cobden, lent itself unceasingly to Palmerstonian manœuvres and enabled him to play the old "Balance of Power" game, to fight wars and to threaten wars without any change from the old diplomatic ways except some occasional "Liberal" verbiage.

It is to Cobden's credit that he early warned the nation that unless Britain was prepared for the most widespread militarisation, unless, indeed, it was prepared for conscription, crushing taxation, and even hunger, popular notions of foreign policy would have to be drastically revised. Thus when in October 1855 he found arm-chair warriors, completely oblivious of the indifferent recruiting figures and the rising price of bread, but still busy "overthrowing" the Russian "tyranny" and, if need were, the "allied despotisms" of Austria and Prussia as well, his angry scorn of the "war at any price" party overflowed. "How," he cried, "is it proposed to raise men to fight that which I am told is the 'battle of European civilisation and liberty against a despotism which aims at nothing less than universal empire'? If this and kindred phrases which have rung in our ears for the last two years mean anything but sound and fury, Englishmen have undertaken not merely the work of one nation, but of half Europe. If the avowed objects of this party are to be persevered in, we are now only at the commencement of the war. If the whole of the Crimea were in our hands to-morrow, we should still be at the beginning of the struggle."

Cobden proved as right about Crimean War objectives as he had already been about the wave of Napoleonic panic that had preceded the fighting. When the second wave of Napoleonic panic, decried by him, arose in 1859 and 1860 and he proved right a third time, his views on foreign policy, despite the obvious weaknesses which had hitherto chilled generous working-class minds, acquired immense authority. Those views, earnestly and persuasively reiterated throughout his political life, are perhaps most succinctly set out in his public letter of July 17, 1850,

which argued, in effect, that the unfortunate outcome of the European revolutions of 1848-49 was the best proof that English non-intervention would have done less ultimate harm to the peoples concerned than the kind of intervention that was undertaken and defeated by the more vigorous counter-intervention for which it had furnished the justification. Here are Cobden's most characteristic positions:

"I came back convinced that the interference of our Foreign Office in the domestic affairs of other countries worked injuriously for the interests of those towards whom all my sympathies were attracted—I mean the people—by exciting exaggerated hopes, encouraging premature efforts, and teaching reliance upon extraneous aid, when they ought to be impressed with the necessity of self-dependence. I found, too, that the principle of intervention, which we sanctioned by our example, was carried out by other Governments in opposition to ours, without scruple, and with at least equal success to ourselves.

"But it is not merely to the interests of foreigners that we should look, even if successful. I should doubt the justice of burdening our people with the expense (for the system is an expensive one) of undertaking, through our Government, to influence the doctrines of other nations. The more I have seen of foreign countries the less do I partake of the comfortable delusion that we are placed at such an immeasurable height above all other races, creeds, and languages, that their progress and liberties depend entirely upon our fostering care and assistance. It is gratifying to our self-love to be told that 36,000,000 Frenchmen, 40,000,000 Germans, 60,000,000 Russians, and 20,000,000 Italians look to us for assistance to emancipate them from tyranny, and that without our countenance they must remain for ever in their present state of degradation. I am sorry to say it, but the mass of our labouring population, if we include in the average the Irish paupers and the rural peasantry, have very little reason to boast of their condition, as compared with the mass of people on the Continent. I am therefore for keeping the attention of the Government directed to home questions. . . . I am opposed to the principle of making them in any way responsible for the good government of foreigners. . . . And whilst I would thus limit the functions of Government to its proper duties and responsibilities, I yield to no one in the warmth or width of my sympathies, as an individual, for the progress of human liberty and happiness throughout the whole world."

Though, as has been said, the growing gulf between the size of the land-forces maintained by Great Britain and those maintained by the Great Powers of the Continent ultimately ensured the triumph of "Cobdenic Non-Intervention," there was still some resistance in the notable cases of the Polish Revolt of 1863 and the Schleswig-Holstein War of 1864. It was the Polish case which called out the hottest working-class demands for intervention, and it is interesting to find that it was the co-operation of London and Paris working-class leaders on behalf of Poland that promoted the foundation of the Working Men's International

Association. Yet as the hopes of British working-class democrats lay mainly in the use of the French and Austrian armies, it may be assumed that something of the relative powerlessness of Britain to affect Continental developments directly had already sunk into the most ardent democratic minds. The Austro-Prussian War of 1866, with its revelation that even control of the French army had not permitted Napoleon to intervene successfully, enforced the lesson still farther. By threatening to enter the war against the side that violated Belgian neutrality England, in 1870, certainly prevented the Franco-Prussian war from overflowing into Belgium, but this British "success" was won while both combatants were preparing to come to grips. After Sedan and Metz Bismarck felt he could ignore British official views on Alsace-Lorraine, though the democratic leaders of the "millions" resented even more strongly than their Government the "mutilation" of a France that had adopted Radical Republicanism.

The militarisation of the Continent proceeded steadily during the 1870's, and in 1875, at the time when Bismarck was meditating the "preventive war" against rearming France which would have entrenched him in a Continental hegemony dangerous even to England, busy newspaper discussion began of whether the time had not come to adopt conscription in this country. It explains why Bismarck retreated before the combined objections of England and Russia, to find even the "*Labour Beehive*" accepting conscription as a possibility if Bismarckian bullying continued. Here is the *Beehive* of January 23, 1875, on the situation:

"Once let England really arrive at the conviction that nothing stands between her and a Prussian invasion but the absence of any just *casus belli* or the presumed good feeling of Prince Bismarck, and we shall see a sudden revulsion and a frantic energy of action which will astonish ourselves as much as it will our neighbours. England will never consent to be at the mercy of the robber nation of Europe. . . . Of one thing we may be sure, that if the question of conscription is seriously raised, several other questions will come up along with it. It will mean nothing less than a complete overhauling of our institutions."

Though Disraeli's near Eastern "success" of 1878 restored some of the characteristic British self-assurance, competent critics speedily recognised that he had taken great risks for doubtful advantages. Certainly few hopeful analogies were drawn from the Disraeli "success" when during the years 1885-87 the prospects of the Great Powers were being discussed amid the feverish Continental war-alarms provoked by a succession of Bulgarian crises and the intense Austro-Russian rivalry for Balkan hegemony that lay behind. Thus, Sir Charles Dilke, the Radical authority, in a notable discussion of the *Present Position of European Politics* (1887) commented not altogether cheerfully upon the fact that even the Tory Government of Lord Salisbury seemed to be reaching the conclusion that, in view of the paucity of British military strength, the defence of Belgian neutrality in a Franco-German struggle or a veto upon the Russian occupation of the Balkans in an Austro-Russian conflict might have ceased to be practical.

English Radicalism 1853-1886

It was possibly in Sir Charles Dilke's work, too, that some British readers were first made aware that there were Continental military critics short-sighted enough to argue that for a rapid war of quick decision like the "Six Weeks War" of 1866 Britain should be counted as inferior to Rumania and about equal to Bulgaria or Serbia. And though Dilke made plain the formidable punishment that England's naval power and wealth would enable her to inflict in the long run, he none the less adjured his brother-Radicals to caution before indulging in complaints that "we could not afford to lavish treasures upon expensive armaments if we were to supply the people with free schools and technical instruction." When the progress of torpedo invention was once again raising the question of whether England's naval line of battle was not vulnerable; when it seemed certain that a Franco-Russian alliance against Britain would be able to threaten simultaneously a Russian advance upon India and French attacks upon the Fleet, the coaling stations and Egypt, the best task for Radicals, according to Dilke, was to see that full value was obtained for the enormous amounts admittedly being spent upon armaments. "When we find," he argued, "that after years upon years of re-organisation, and years upon years of fabulous expenditure, England is virtually without an army . . . surely the time has come when revolutionary measures should be tried. To see our Reserves called out for little wars in Egypt or the Soudan has shown that our present scheme of army re-organisation is a failure."

And how necessary it was that that failure should be repaired Dilke urged untiringly. "The present position of the European world," he declared, "is one in which sheer force holds a larger place than it has held in modern times since the fall of Napoleon. . . . A few years ago there was perhaps the will to take and hold by force, but the intention was as completely wrapped up and concealed as now it is naked and undisguised; and as regards the extra-European affairs of the European Powers, the desire to grab the lands of the weaker races is also less enveloped now than it was earlier in the century in such specious forms of words as the 'blessings of civilisation.'" In such circumstances it is not surprising to find that Dilke completely omitted from his review of the effective elements in the international situation all mention of the once-promising Cobdenite propaganda for International Arbitration and Disarmament. For the time, indeed, the anti-conscription sentiment of Continental workmen-Socialists, anxious not to be marched against one another from opposite sides of the frontier in "bourgeois wars," seemed to the political "realist" a much more vital international consideration.

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English Radicalism 1853-1886

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PERIODICALS (ULTRA-RADICAL, "ADVANCED," AND "LABOUR")

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
1850-	<i>Reynolds's Weekly Newspaper</i>	Flourishing Ultra
1843-	<i>Lloyd's Weekly News</i>	Milder than <i>Reynolds's</i>
1852-8	<i>The People's Paper</i>	Chartist weekly
1850-60	<i>The Leader</i>	"Advanced" Middle-class Weekly
1808-81	<i>The Examiner</i>	Similar
1841-	<i>The Nonconformist</i>	Radical Dissenter
1846-72	<i>The Reasoner Series</i>	Radical Secularist
1824-	<i>The Westminster Review</i>	"Advanced" Quarterly

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1855-	<i>The Liberator</i>	Disestablishment Monthly
1855-69	<i>The Morning (and Evening) Star</i>	Cobdenite Morning and Evening Dailies
1856-9	<i>National Sunday League Record</i>	Anti-Sabbatarian Monthly
1858 (28 issues)	<i>The London News</i>	Chartist Weekly
1860-93	<i>The National Reformer</i>	Bradlaugh Weekly
1861-76	<i>The Beehive</i>	Trade Union Weekly
1863-6	<i>The Miner and Workman's Advocate</i>	Miner's Weekly
1868-	<i>The Echo</i>	Halfpenny Evening
1871-84	<i>Fors Clavigera</i>	Ruskin's Monthly
1871-	<i>The Co-operative News</i>	Co-operative Weekly
1872-4	<i>The Republican Herald</i>	Republican
1872-94	<i>Labourer's Union Chronicle Series</i>	Weekly organs of Farm-Labour Unionism
1873-4	<i>The Miner's Advocate</i>	Miner's Weekly
1880-2	<i>The Radical</i>	Anti-Irish-Coercion Weekly
1881-5	<i>The Labour Standard</i>	Trade Union Weekly
1881-	<i>The Freethinker</i>	Anti-Religious Weekly
1884-	<i>Justice</i>	Social Democratic Weekly
1885-	<i>The Cotton Factory Times</i>	Cotton Employees' Weekly
1885-8	<i>The Anarchist</i>	Anarchist Monthly
1885-	<i>The Commonweal</i>	Socialist League Monthly; Weekly 1886
1886-	<i>The Labour Tribune</i>	Miners' and Ironworkers' Weekly

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6. Trade Union:
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English Radicalism 1853-1886

tive Bricklayers; Operative Stonemasons; Operative Plasterers; Amalgamated Painters and Decorators; Steam Engine Makers; Boiler Makers; Associated Shipwrights; Glass Bottle Makers of Yorkshire; Vellum Binders; Alliance Cabinet Makers, etc., etc.

- (b) *Flint Glass Makers' Magazine*, Monthly, beginning 1850; *Ironworkers' Journal*, Monthly, beginning 1863; *Operative Bricklayers' Circular*, beginning 1861.
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<i>Date</i>	<i>Volume</i>	<i>Report</i>
1852	XXII	Royal Commission Report on Oxford University
	XXXVI	Papers on Hostilities with Burmah
1852-3	III	Government of India Bill and Lords' Amendments
	XX	Three Select Committee Reports on Coal Mine Accidents
	XLIV	Royal Commission Report on Cambridge University
	LXIX	Further Papers on Burmah Hostilities
1854	VII	Select Committee Report on Friendly Society Bill
	IX	Four Sel. Comm. Reports on Coal Mine Accidents
1854-5	IX (1, 2, 3)	Five Sel. Comm. Reports on Army before Sebastopol
	XX	Papers relating to the Reorganisation of the Civil Service
	XXXIII	Report on the State of Hospitals in Crimea and Scutari
	XL	Report on Alleged cases of Police Torture at Madras
1856	VII	Lords' Sel. Comm. on (Public) Capital Punishment
	XXIII	Report on Disturbances in Hyde Park on Sunday, July 1, 1855, and the conduct of the Metropolitan Police
1857	XII	Papers on the Proceedings of H.M. Naval Forces at Canton
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	XXXII	First Report of Sanitary Commission

English Radicalism 1853-1886

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 Aborigines Protection Society, 354, 355
 Abyssinia, 153, 370, 373 n.
 Administrative Reform, 37, 44, 45
 Administrative Reform Association, 41, 42, 44, 45
 Adult Suffrage (*see* Suffrage)
 Afghanistan, 236, 240, 245, 246, 247, 248, 260, 263, 319, 357, 373-4
 Agnosticism, 203 n.
 Agricultural Holdings Bills, 201, 277
 Agricultural Labourers' Unions, 189, 225, 238 n., 389-90
 Agriculture, "Burdens on," 195
 Alabama Controversy, 98, 174, 180, 182
 Albert, Prince Consort, 22, 23, 26
 Allan, William, 108, 119, 122, 123 n.
 Allotments (*see* Land)
 Amalgamated Societies, 108-9, 119
 Amalgamated Trades, Conference of, 119
 America (*see* United States)
 Anarchism, 274, 335 n.
 Annual Register, The, 75 n., 290-1
 Anti-Corn Law League, 12, 33 n., 84, 102, 105
 Anti-Popery, 29, 32, 102
 Applegarth, R., 108, 119
 Arbitration—
 Industrial, 106, 114, 239
 International, 106, 408
 Arch, Joseph, 189 n., 363 n.
 Army flogging, 243, 244, 265
 Army Purchase Abolition, 40, 106, 174-7
 Army Reorganisation, 168, 169, 176, 408
 Art Galleries (and Art Education), 398
 Artisans' Dwellings Bill, 201, 403
 Asia Minor, 234, 236
 Atheism, 133, 171, 203 n., 259, 319
 Australia, 18, 353, 355, 357, 359, 360-1
 Austria, 24, 27, 49, 58, 72, 73, 91 n., 210, 305, 405-7
 Aylesbury, 37 n., 103
 Ayrton, A. S., M.P., 96 n., 399

 Baines, E., M.P., 78, 81 n., 148
 Bakers, 94, 108 n., 128-9
 Balaclava, 33, 36, 38
 Balfour, A. J., 335

 Ballot, 12, 26, 28 n., 32, 47, 51, 52, 63, 64, 72, 74, 75, 95, 97, 100, 105, 106, 125, 153, 154, 158, 163, 173, 174, 177, 181-2, 265
 Barker, J., 142
 Barnsley, 27 n., 243 n.
 Basutoland, 354, 355, 361
 Baths and Washhouses, Public, 298, 403 n.
 Bax, E. B., 332
 Baxter, W. E., M.P., 95, 145 n.
 Bazley, T., M.P., 84
 Beaconsfield, Lord (*see* Disraeli, B.)
 Beales, Edmond, 83, 86, 91 n., 105
 Bechuanaland, 357-8
 Beehive, The, 86, 120 n., 121 n., 122, 169-70, 178, 193, 197, 201, 204, 206, 207-8, 211 n., 212, 407
 Beesly, Professor, 121, 122, 169, 207-208, 324
 Belfast, 403
 Belgium, 165 n., 407
 Benefit Building Societies, 126
 Berkeley, F. H. F., M.P., 52
 Berlin Congress, 224, 233
 Bermondsey, 391 n., 392
 Bethell, Lord Westbury, 65 n., 392
 Bethnal Green, 46, 182, 392
 Birkenhead, 27 n.
 Birmingham, 48, 51, 70, 91, 97 n., 156, 209, 212, 218-22, 232, 307, 403
 Birmingham Liberal Association, 219-22, 286 n., 294, 403
 Bishop Auckland, 91 n.
 Bishops, Removal from Lords urged, 162, 279
 Bismarck, 98, 165, 274, 407
 Blackburn, 19 n., 109
 List of Rates, 77
 Boards of Guardians (*see* Guardians)
 Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders, 109, 325
 Boot and Shoe Makers, 77
 Amal. Soc. of Cordwainers, 94
 Borneo, North, 362
 Bosnia, 210
 Bowring, Sir J., 62
 Bradford, 21 n., 70, 202 n.
 Bradlaugh, Charles, 85, 99 n., 141-3, 165 n., 168 n., 172, 231, 255, 263, 266, 270, 280, 313 n., 319, 334, 380
 Brass Finishers, 109 n.
 Brass Workers, 125 n., 243

Bribery, 32, 265, 330
 Bricklayers, Operative, 77, 94, 119
 Brickmakers, 109 n., 111
 Bright, Jacob, M.P., 162-3, 241 n.
 Bright, John, 11, 16, 17, 21, 24, 30,
 31, 32, 33, 46, 48, 49, 51, 53, 69-
 71, 74, 75 n., 76 n., 81, 92, 93,
 95, 100, 105, 111 n., 113 n., 145 n.,
 149, 150, 151, 154 n., 156 n., 179,
 187, 214, 225, 232, 246, 250 n.,
 256, 261, 268, 281, 321, 367
 Brighton, 94, 192
 Bristol, 85, 229, 281
 Broadhurst, H., M.P., 87 n., 123 n.,
 267-8, 280, 328
 Bryce, Professor, M.P., 255, 278
 Budget (1853), 14-15; (1860), 75;
 (1861), 75 n.; (1863), 81 n.; (1864),
 81 n.; (1865), 81; (1866), 81;
 (1871), 175; (1874), 195; (1885),
 310-11
 Building Trades, 77, 87, 118-19
 Bulgaria, 207-14, 226, 227, 285, 408
 Burials Bills, 161-2, 179, 184, 191,
 218, 224, 257
 Burma, 18, 357, 380-2
 Burnett, J., 328
 Burns, John, 331 n., 335 n., 337 n.,
 338, 339 n.
 Burt, T., M.P., 123, 243, 255
 Butler, Samuel, 137
 Buxton, C., M.P., 163 n., 399

Cabinet Makers, West End, 94
 Cambridge, 221 n.
 Cambridge University, 13, 55-6, 155,
 172, 306
 Cambridge, Duke of, 168
 Campbell, Sir G., M.P., 360, 361 n.,
 363
 Campbell-Bannerman, H., M.P., 198 n.
 Canada, 12-13, 344, 346, 347, 348-9,
 352 n., 355, 359, 360
 Canning, Stratford, 21, 22
 Canton, 61, 62
 Cape Colony, 344, 346, 361
 Cardiff, 403 n.
 Cardwell, E., 170
 Carlisle, 12, 91 n.
 Carlyle, T., 89, 105 n., 166, 215 n.,
 331 n., 356 n.
 Carnarvon, Lord, 228, 314, 315
 Carpenter, Edward, 332
 Carpenters and Joiners, 77, 94, 108,
 109, 111 n., 115 n., 325
 "Caucus," The, 220-1, 254, 283, 284,
 288, 290, 308, 318
 "Cave of Adullam," 88-90
 Cawnpore, 65

Chamberlain, Joseph, 149, 156, 179,
 187-8, 192, 199, 202 n., 209, 218-
 222, 232, 243, 253-4, 261, 266,
 268, 269-70, 271-7, 280, 281,
 282-6, 288, 292, 294-5, 297, 298-
 303, 309, 311, 317-18, 321, 359,
 403
 Champion, H. H., 332
 Charity Commission, 14 n., 54, 199
 Charity Readaptation, 54, 106, 152,
 199, 313, 397-8
 Chartists, 19, 20, 21, 31, 70, 84, 99 n.,
 127 n., 148
 Chelsea, 27 n., 255
 Chester, 276 n.
 China, 51, 62-3
 Church of England, 54-6, 140-1, 144-
 148, 152, 155-9, 179, 192, 195,
 199, 207, 224-5, 236, 275, 303-5
 Church of Ireland, 52, 67, 153
 Church of Scotland, 13 n., 195, 196-8,
 207, 246, 275
 Church Rates, 52, 103, 104, 275,
 279 n., 391 n.
 Churchill, Lord Randolph, 285, 287 n.,
 288, 293-4, 311, 315, 316-17,
 378-9
 Civil Service, 36, 41, 44
 Civil Service Commission, 44, 65
 Clarendon, Lord, 151
 Clerical Fellowships attacked, 172-3,
 179
 Clerkenwell Green, 104 n., 330
 Cobden, Richard, 15-18, 21, 31, 35,
 38, 48, 49, 53, 54, 57, 61, 62, 67,
 72, 73, 79, 80, 81, 102, 106, 111 n.,
 301 n., 405-6
 Cobden Club, 332, 362 n., 378 n.
 Cockermouth, 97 n.
 Coercion Acts (*see* Ireland)
 Colenso, Bishop, 133, 138-9
 Collet, Dobson, 20
 Collings, Jesse, M.P., 156, 255, 256, 312
 Colonial Expenditure, Tariffs, etc. (*see*
 Empire)
 Communism, 171, 214, 280, 299
 Compound Householders, 88, 97 n.,
 99, 106 n., 389
 Conscriptio discussed, 165-6, 405-8
 Conspiracy to Murder Bill (1858), 68
 Constantinople, 21, 214-16, 227-9
 Co-operation, 19, 126-7
 Corrupt Practices, 51 n., 276-7, 286
 (*and see* Bribery)
 Cossham, Handel, M.P., 85
 Coulson, E., 119
 County (representative) Boards de-
 manded, 15, 163, 191, 246, 250,
 252 n., 270, 281, 286, 318, 383,
 389

- County Franchise Reform urged, 100,
124, 125 n., 184, 191, 204, 207,
218, 225, 246, 252 n., 255 n., 259,
326, 327 (*see also* Suffrage)
- Courtney, L. H., M.P., 256, 281
- Cowen, Joseph, M.P., 68, 85, 92,
205 n., 223, 225, 234 n., 266, 284,
343-4, 357 n.
- Cremer, J. R., 84, 87, 103, 104, 110
- Crompton, H., 324, 325
- Cross, Mr. Secretary, M.P., 199, 201,
202, 268, 283
- Crown, The, attacked, 167-72, 236,
330 n.
- Cumulative Vote, 98 n., 179, 282, 393
- Carriers, United, 94
- Cyprus, 231, 233-4
- Daily News*, The, 23 n., 151, 211, 347
- Daily Telegraph*, The, 59, 60, 156 n.,
223-4, 227 n.
- Darlington, 252 n.
- Darwin, Charles, 134-6
- Davis, W. J., 125 n., 243
- Davitt, Michael, 161 n., 244, 253, 269,
273 n.
- Dawson, George, 43, 84
- Death Penalty opposed, 106
- Debtors' Imprisonment opposed, 124,
136
- Deceased Wife's Sister Marriages,
155, 161 n., 278, 291
- Democratic Federation (*see* Social
Democratic Federation)
- Denmark, 81
- Depression—
Agricultural, 237-9, 244, 250-1
Trade, 234, 237-9, 240-1, 246, 251,
315, 316, 319
- Derby, Lord (14th), 12, 52, 61, 90,
93, 98, 100, 101, 103
- Derby, Lord (15th), 210, 217, 228, 232
- Dickens, Charles, 45
- Dickson, Lt.-Col., 83, 86
- Dilke, Sir C., 97 n., 168, 171 n., 199,
229 n., 255, 256, 261, 266, 275,
281, 292, 297, 311, 408
- Dillon, John, M.P., 262, 273 n.
- Disestablishment and Disendowment,
13, 124, 151, 155, 179, 188, 195,
196, 198-9, 203, 204, 207, 221,
224, 252, 255, 279 n., 280 n., 304,
315, 317, 319, 330
- Disraeli, Benjamin, 12 n., 45, 49, 52,
69, 90, 93, 95, 96, 97, 100, 101,
103, 149, 153-4, 162 n., 164,
181 n., 184 n., 186, 190, 194, 195,
199, 205 n., 208, 211-17, 223-4,
226 n., 228, 233, 234-5, 239-41,
247-9, 251-2, 263, 344, 356, 407
- Dissenters, 12, 13, 32, 55, 56, 102,
103, 143-8, 149, 155, 158, 159,
161, 172, 179, 180, 187, 191, 193,
224, 291, 295, 390, 391, 393-5
- Distress, 41, 48, 98, 241 n., 249, 250,
273, 334, 337-9
- Divorce, 65
- Dixon, George, M.P., 149, 156
- Dublin, 92, 403
- Dundee, 33
- Early Closing Association, 128
- East End (London), 48, 98, 105, 175,
255, 265, 340
- Echo*, The, 105
- Economy, 106, 123 n. (*see also* Re-
trenchment)
- Edinburgh, 21, 33, 70, 403
- Edinburgh Review*, The, 226 n., 364
- Education, 13, 14, 54-5, 106, 124,
140, 204, 205, 218, 219, 393-8
- Education Acts, 157-9, 179, 182, 193,
195, 205, 205 n., 219
- Education Department, 54-5
- Education—
Free, advocated, 152, 156-7, 221,
237, 280 n., 299, 304, 317, 318,
335
Free School Meals advocated, 335
"Middle Class," 54, 157
Secular, 13, 156, 193, 203, 218 n.,
219 n., 237
Technical, 313, 398, 408
Undenominational, 54, 156-9, 193,
203, 207, 320
"Voluntary" (Denominational), 54-
55, 140, 156-9, 179, 193, 194, 221,
393-5
- Edwards, Passmore J., 105, 106, 255
- Egypt, 236, 246, 260, 273, 283, 287,
303, 305, 320, 343-4, 357, 363,
408
- Eight Hours Day, 132, 334 n., 335,
341 n.
- Election Addresses quoted, 106, 123 n.,
124-5, 236-7, 252, 303-4, 325-6
- Electoral Reform Association, 200-1
- Electricity Act (1882), 403, 404 n.
- Elgin, Lord, 51
- Elliot, Sir H., 208, 210, 211 n., 212
- Emigration, 18, 189, 345, 356 n.-7 n.,
363
- Empire, British—
Colonial Appointments Patronage,
236, 343, 357
Colonial Defence Costs opposed,
67, 106, 343-9, 352, 355
Colonial Food Duties, 362
Colonial Independence suggested,
343, 348, 352 n., 360

Empire, British (*continued*)—
 Colonial Tariffs attacked, 348, 352, 353 n.-4 n.
 Emigration to Colonies, 345, 356 n.-357 n., 363
 Expansion criticised, 203, 215, 236, 314, 343
 Federation discussed, 330, 358 n.-359 n.
 Imperialist sentiment rising, 340, 343-4, 356-9, 363
 Employers' Liability (*see* Workman's Compensation)
 Endowed Schools Act (1869), 152, 196, 198-9, 397
 Endowed Schools Commission, 152, 199
 Engine Drivers and Firemen, 109
 Engineers, 77, 94, 108, 111 n., 325, 341 n.
 Epping Forest, 183, 183 n., 201
 Equal Electoral Districts demanded, 280, 308, 330 (*and see* Redistribution)
Essays and Reviews, 136-7
 Evans, Howard, 86
 Expenditure, National, Figures, 80
 Eyre, Governor, 349-51, 356 n.

Factory Legislation and Inspection, 29, 110, 124, 127-8, 196, 235, 238, 277, 278 n., 326, 327, 341
 "Fair Trade," 327, 337 (*see also* Reciprocity)
 "Fancy Franchises," 27 n., 28, 71, 97 n., 383
 Farmers' Alliance, 250, 275
 Fawcett, Henry, M.P., 88, 113, 154, 168, 172-3, 184, 186, 192, 256, 281, 369-72
 Fenianism (*see* Ireland)
 Fiji Islands, 236, 354-5
 Financial Reform Association, 80 n., 351 n.
 Financial Reform Union, 351-4
 Finlen, J., 101, 104
 Finsbury, 20, 43, 46, 96
 Firth, J. B., M.P., 255, 257 n., 399
 Foreign Policy, 405-8 and *passim*
 Foreign Policy Committees, 21 n.
 Foresters, Ancient Order of, 29 n., 126
 Forster, W. E., 76, 84, 149, 150, 156-158, 187, 204, 241 n., 246, 258, 261, 264, 266
Fortnightly Review, The, 187, 280
 "Fourth Party," 257, 259
 Fox, W. J., M.P., 13
 France, 16, 49, 164-7, 274, 298, 358, 359, 405-8

Franchise Bill, Extension, etc. (*see* Parliamentary Reform and Suffrage)
 "Free Breakfast Table," 80 n., 124
 Free Trade, 15, 80, 316 n.
 Froude, J. A., 161 n., 166 n., 356 n.
 Fugitive Slave Circulars, 194, 205-6
 Game Laws attacked, 106, 125 n., 250, 257, 259
 Garibaldi, 76, 79, 86
 General Elections, 48, 62-3, 72, 88, 89, 102, 105, 192, 378-9
 George, Henry, 274, 299, 337
 German Confederation, 81, 91
 German Confederation, North, 98
 German Empire, 305, 357, 358, 359, 407
 Gibraltar, 362
 Gibson, Milner T., M.P., 15, 54, 69, 80 n., 148
 Giffen, R., 238 n., 332-3
 Gladstone, W. E., 12, 14, 15, 45, 61, 73, 75, 81, 83, 88, 90, 95, 98, 99, 103, 104, 105, 107, 133, 149-55, 164-78, 180, 184-95, 197 n., 202, 203, 209, 212-13, 215-18, 221, 229 n., 230, 232, 245-8, 251-4, 256, 258-9, 263-7, 271, 273, 281, 285-6, 289-93, 297, 300, 303-4, 306, 308, 310, 311, 314, 319-21, 323, 357, 375, 381
 Glasgow, 33, 70, 92, 97, 307, 403
 Glasgow Trades, 110 n.
 Gloucester, 276 n.
 Goderich, Lord (*see* Ripon, Lord)
 Gordon, General, 285, 287, 304-7, 319, 357
 Graham, Sir James, 12, 45, 46, 62
 Grammar Schools, 125 n., 152 n.
 Granville, Lord, 150 n., 151, 209, 221 n., 256, 352
 Greece, 24, 260, 349
 Greenwich, 177, 192, 247, 401
 Greg, W. R., 118 n., 133
Greville Memoirs, 23, 25 n., 35
 Guardians, Boards of, 239, 282, 386, 389, 404
 Guile, D., 119, 123 n.

Hackney, 192 n.
 Halifax, 57, 94
 Hall, Sir B., M.P., 17 n., 56-7
 Harcourt, Sir W. V., M.P., 206 n., 256, 279 n., 281, 366 n.
 Hardie, Keir, 341
 Harney, Julian, 20
 Harrison, Frederic, 119, 324
 Hartington, Lord, 151, 204, 221 n., 229, 243, 256, 281

Index

Hartwell, R., 86
 Hatters, 94
 Heywood, Alderman, 84
 Hibbert, J. T., M.P., 161
 Hicks Beach, Sir M., 247
 Higher Criticism, 134-8
 Holms, W., M.P., 241 n.
 Holyoake, G. J., 59, 133, 141
 Home Rule (*see* Ireland)
 Hong-Kong, 60, 61
 Honiton, 96 n.
 Hospitals, Public, suggested, 298, 398
 Household Suffrage (*see* Suffrage)
 Housing, Working Class, 106, 298,
 313, 315, 403
 Howell, G., 84, 86, 87, 103, 106, 110,
 121, 122
 Huddersfield, 94, 267
 Hughes, Tom, M.P., 76, 88, 119
 Hume, Joseph, M.P., 13, 28, 53
 Hungary, 33, 49
 Hyde Park disturbances, 46, 47, 48,
 91, 230-1
 Hyde Park meetings, 98-9, 101, 104,
 165, 183, 230-1, 289, 338-9
 Hyndman, H., 274, 329-41, 373-4

Illustrated London News, 11, 18, 39,
 43-4, 57-8, 63, 164, 231, 266-7,
 303-4
 Income Tax, 14-15, 61, 81, 191, 195,
 246, 310
 Graduation advocated, 14-15, 61,
 75, 299, 300 n.
 Ingram, H., M.P., 43 n.
 India Acts, 17, 68
 Anglo-Indian community, 375-8,
 380
 Army, 364, 371-2, 374, 375 n.,
 378 n.
 Board of Control, 17, 367
 British India Society, 16 n., 364
 Civil Service, 364, 370, 374, 377,
 379
 Congress, 377, 378 n., 380
 Cotton Duties, 246, 375-6
 Cotton Growing, 16-17
 East India Company, 16-17, 65 n.,
 365-7
 "Educated Classes," 375, 378 n.,
 379
 Education, 17, 367, 376
 Famine Relief, 373
 Finance and Debt, 17, 246, 368,
 369, 370, 371, 373, 374
 Government of, 232, 241, 378
 Imperial Title, 205, 373
 Mutiny, 60 n., 65, 66
 Native Civil Servants, 370, 377,
 380

India (*continued*)—
 Native Community, 370, 375, 377,
 379
 Native Press, 375, 376, 382 n.
 Native States, 364, 376
 Police, 368-9
 Public Works, 369-70, 374
 Reform Society, 367
 "Russian danger," 213, 214, 226 n.,
 315, 408
 "Scientific Frontier," 240, 251
 Secretary of State, 367, 369, 371,
 380-2
 Self-Government, 364, 376, 380
 Taxation, 368
 Wars, 17-18, 367
 Inkerman, 33, 37
 International, The (*see* Working Men's
 International)
 International Labour Congresses, 328,
 341
 Ireland—
 Arrears of Rent, 258, 271-2, 273-4
 Church Disestablishment, 102, 149,
 153-5, 193, 235
 Church Surplus, 185, 235, 245, 272,
 315
 "Coercion Acts," 253, 257-8, 261-
 267, 270, 272, 273, 288 n., 311,
 314, 315, 320, 321, 330
 "Equality for," 252 n., 258, 283
 Evictions, 160, 258, 260
 Fenians, 98, 99 n., 103, 152, 159,
 161, 265, 311
 Franchise Extension, 252, 283, 288,
 306
 Home Rule, 124, 184, 194, 235,
 236, 248, 250, 265, 304, 311, 315,
 321, 330
 Intermediate Education, 235
 Irish Vote in England, 193 n., 320
 Land Bills, 154-5, 160, 253, 258-9,
 261, 263-6
 Land Court, 253, 265, 268, 270-1
 Land Grievances, 149, 159-60, 246,
 269
 Land League, 247, 253, 258, 260-8,
 273
 Liberals, 186, 195, 203, 235, 320
 Nationalist Party, 255, 263-7, 273,
 318-19, 320, 321 n.
 Oath Grievances, 32, 52, 147-8
 "Outrages," 149, 261, 269, 271-2
 Parliamentary Obstruction, 218,
 244-5, 260, 263, 266, 270-1
 Protestants, 185
 Reform League, 92
 Reform Bills, 100, 103, 258, 306
 Roman Catholic Hierarchy, 186,
 203, 244

Ireland (*continued*)

Tax Grievances, 15, 310
Teachers' Pensions, 245
Tenant Purchase, 160, 272, 315
University Education, 184-6, 244
Ironfounders, 94, 109
Ironworkers, 109-10, 123, 341
Italy, 33, 49, 57, 73 n., 79, 91 n., 406

Jamaica, 349-51

Jewish Emancipation, 12, 13, 32, 69, 254, 291

Jingoism described, 223-4

Jones, Ernest, 19, 20, 47, 70, 84, 105

Junta, The, 119

Juryman's Qualification, 124, 236

Justices of the Peace, hostility to, 124, 191, 236, 281, 318, 326, 383-5

Kane, John, 123, quoted 124-5

Kensington, 27 n.

Kimberley, Lord, 151, 353

King, Locke, M.P., 62, 78

Kossuth, 11, 21, 33

Labouchere, H., M.P. (b. 1831), 255, 297, 305 n.

"Labour Laws," The, 122, 124, 156, 197, 202

"Labour Parliament," The, 19

Labour Representation, 121-6, 155-6, 164, 201, 319, 323, 324

Lambeth, 401

Lancashire, 16-17, 27 n., 181 n., 193 n., 307, 316

Lancashire Cotton Famine, 78, 366 n.

Land—

Agricultural Labour, 189, 225, 238 n., 298, 316-17

Allotments and Small Holdings, 313, 316-18, 321

and Labour League, 123 n., 164 n.

Compulsory Sale, 298, 301, 313, 316, 318

Cultivation of Waste, 106, 125 n.

Ground Rent rating, 299

Laws attacked, 203, 204, 207, 236, 246, 250, 252, 255 n., 301-2, 304, 313, 317, 325

Leasehold Enfranchisement, 312, 314

Nationalisation, 155 n., 326, 330, 331, 336

Primogeniture and Entail, 125 n., 191, 252 n., 270, 331

"Single Tax," 331; Taxation, 388

Tenant Right, 160, 250, 251 n.

Tenure Reform, 155, 179, 221, 249, 250, 252, 255, 259, 277

Land (*continued*)—

Unearned Increment, 155, 207, 270, 299

Langley, J. B., 86

Lansdowne, Lord, 152

Lawson, H. L. W., M.P., 312-14

Lawson, Sir W., M.P., 84, 88 n.

Layard, A. H., M.P., 37, 39, 40 n., 43-5, 50, 53, 228

Leader, The, 63

Leasehold Enfranchisement (*see* Land)

Leatham, E. A., M.P., 154 n.

Leeds, 85, 92, 97 n., 202 n., 267, 307

Leeds Mercury, The, 75

Leicester, 202 n.

Leicester, Joseph, 93

Leno, J. B., 85

Liberation Society, 143-8, 196-200, 201, 245, 275, 278

Libraries, Municipal, etc., Free, 298, 398, 404 n.

Lightermen, 94

Lindsay, W. S., M.P., 40, 44, 45

Liquor Licensing, 106, 174-5, 180, 182, 195, 207, 246, 282, 310, 313, 384-5 (*see also* Local Option, Sunday Closing of Public Houses, Temperance Movement)

Liverpool, 33, 71, 96 n., 97, 202 n., 232, 252 n., 307, 403

Local Boards, 282, 386, 389

Local Option, 207, 252 n., 254, 318, 319

Local Self-Government, 125 n., 175, 203, 252 n., 259, 281, 304, 311, 318, Chap. xxiv *passim*

Lock-outs, 19, 109-10

Lodgers, 88, 313, 389

London, 158, 163, 183, 191, 236-7, 289, 307, 309, 313, 315, 391-402 (*see also* East End, West End)

City Corporation, 183 n., 191, 255, 399-402

City Guilds, 237, 255, 257, 313, 397-402

City Parochial Charities, 278, 397, 398, 400

Metropolitan Board of Works, 396, 402 n., 403

Metropolitan Police, 46-7, 91, 93, 336, 339-40, 396, 397

Metropolitan Vestries and District Boards, 386, 389-90, 396

Municipality urged, 163, 191, 236, 255, 259, 270, 275, 278, 281, 286, 313, 319, 396-402

Parks and Open Spaces, 398, 400 (*see also* Hyde Park, Trafalgar Square)

Rating Equalisation, 396, 397 n.

Index

London (continued)—

School Board, 158, 219, 395-8
 Trades Council, 77, 87, 289
 Trades Delegates, 19, 20
 London University, 27 n., 306
 Lords, House of, 53, 70, 103, 154-5,
 176-8, 181-2, 274, 277 n., 289,
 304 n.
 Attacked, 75, 154, 160 n., 237, 259,
 260, 263-5, 270, 281, 282, 285,
 289-97, 319, 330, 336
 Lowe, R., 83, 89, 105, 187
 Ludlow, J. M., 114 n., 364, 368
 Lush, Alderman, M.P., 352

 McArthur, W., M.P., 352, 355
 McCarthy, Justin, M.P., 255
 MacDonald, Alexander, M.P., 120 n.,
 122, 243, 265 n.
 McLaren, D., M.P., 95
 Malmesbury, Lord, 14 n., 150, 344
 Malta, 362, 373
 Manchester, 11, 16 n., 19, 26, 33, 34,
 37, 51, 70, 92, 94, 97 n., 105, 111,
 229, 232, 241 n., 307, 403
 Trade Union Inquiry, 112, 114 n.
 Manhood Suffrage (*see* Suffrage)
 Mann, Tom, 331 n.
 Marriage, Institution of, 142-3, 171
 Marx, Karl, 87, 107, 110, 111 n., 329
 Marylebone, 97 n.
 Masons, Operative, 94, 108, 115, 119
 Master Builders, 115, 118
 Mauritius, 361-2
 Maxse, Capt., 200-1
 Merchant Shipping Acts, 202, 205 n.
 Merthyr Tydvil, 151 n.
 Metalliferous Mines Bill, 201
 Methodists—
 Primitive, 144 n.
 Wesleyan, 144 n., 156 n.
 Metropolitan Board of Works, Police
 and Vestries (*see* London)
 Miall, S., M.P., 55, 88, 89, 148, 155
 Middlesbrough, 85, 123-5
 Midlothian, 247, 252, 291
 Mill, J. S., M.P., 83, 88, 113, 155,
 162, 200, 351, 399
 Miners, 29, 68
 Unions, 108-9, 129-32, 189 n.
 Mines Inspection, 129-32, 238
 Minimum Wage advocated, 336, 341 n.
 Minority Representation, 97, 220
 Molesworth, Sir W., M.P., 12, 25,
 345-6
 Morgan, O., M.P., 162 n., 201-2
 Morley, John, 148, 187, 188, 199, 225,
 254, 266, 280, 304, 334
 Morley, Samuel, M.P., 43 n., 45, 55,
 70, 88 n., 102, 121, 151

Morning Advertiser, The, 21, 23 n.,
 26, 43
Morning Star, The, 60, 60 n., 351
 Morris, William, 331-2, 334
 Mundella, A. J., M.P., 192, 239, 241 n.,
 242, 256, 257 n., 281, 324, 328
 Municipalisation (Gas, Electricity,
 Water), 334 n., 342, 402-4
 Municipal Reforms advocated, 402-4
 (*see also* Town Councils)
 Museums, Municipal, etc., 398, 404 n.

 Nana Sahib, 65
 Naples, 57, 73
 Napoleon III, 16, 22, 49, 61, 68-9,
 72-3, 76, 165, 166, 405, 407
 Natal, 346, 361
 National Education League, 124, 156-
 159, 179, 182, 218-19
 National Education Union, 156
 National Liberal Federation, 209,
 218-22, 241 n., 245, 264, 268,
 279, 280
 National Reform Association, 28
 National Reform League, Chap. vi
passim, Chap. vii *passim*
 National Reform Union, Chap. vi
passim, Chap. vii *passim*, 160,
 201, 207, 245, 252, 275
National Reformer, The, 70 n., 85,
 142, 360
 National Sunday League, 57
 Navy, The, 153 n., 174 n., 180-1,
 195 n., 352, 359 n., 408
 Newcastle-on-Tyne, 33, 68, 92, 94,
 280, 403 n.
 Newcastle, Duke of, 38
 Newfoundland, 344, 359
 New Guinea, 287, 357
 Newspaper Power, 23, 31-2, 35, 36-
 43, 48-50, 58-60, 63, 79, 82, 170
 Newspaper Tax abolished, 59
 Newton, William, 20
 New Zealand, 343, 347-8, 352-3, 363
 Niger, Lower, 357, 358, 362
 Nine Hours Day, 77, 111, 124
 Nonconformists, 144, 144 n. (*and see*
 Dissenters)
 Non-Intervention, 106, 217, 249, 405-
 408
 Northampton, 255, 263 n.
 Northcote, Sir S., 41, 228, 288, 294,
 306
 Northern Political Union, 68
 Northern Reform Union, 92
 Nottingham, 33, 202 n.
 Nova Scotia, 344

 O'Brien, Bronterre, 20, 47
 O'Connor, T. P., M.P., 223, 255

Odd Fellows, 29 n., 126
 Odger, G., 101, 111, 119, 149, 156
 Orange Free State, 346, 354
 O'Shea, Capt., M.P., 271-2
 Otway, A. J., M.P., 151
 Oxford, 94, 155, 206 n., 276 n.
 Oxford University, 13, 32, 55, 306

 Painters, United, 94; Manchester Alliance, 108, 115
 Palmerston, Lord, 21, 24-6, 30, 31, 38, 39, 42-4, 47, 48, 50, 52, 58, 64, 67-9, 72, 73, 81, 83, 349, 405
 Paper Duties Bill (1860), 75
 Paris Commune (1871), 169-71, 274, 329
 Paris, Congress of (1856), 49, 57-8
 Parish Government, 387, 389-92
 Parks, Commons and Open Spaces, 183, 205 n., 398, 400, 403 n.
 Parliaments—
 Shorter, 100
 Triennial, 236, 330
 Annual, 330 n.
 Parliamentary (and Official) Oaths Reform, 32, 52, 69 n., 263, 265, 266, 270, 279 n., 313
 Parliamentary Procedure "Reform," 263, 267, 271, 274, 304, 317, 318, 320
 Parliamentary Reform "Movements" (1858-9), 70, 74 n.
 (1865-8), Chap. vi *passim*, Chap. vii *passim*
 (1884), 279-97, 327
 (see also Reform Bills, Redistribution, Suffrage Extension)
 Parnell, C. S., M.P., 244, 253, 258, 262, 266-8, 271, 272, 273, 283 n., 311, 315, 319
 Patent Law Reform, 243, 277, 326
 Paulton, A. W., 102
 Pauperism, 300, 301, 312
 Payment of Members, 162, 280, 300, 326, 330, 336
 Peace Society, 16, 21, 105
 Working Men's Peace Conference, 232
 Peace, *Herald of*, 60
 Pease, Joseph, 16 n., 366 n.
 Peelites, 12, 13, 24, 39, 151, 195
 Peerages (Life), 53
 Penny Illustrated Paper, 170-1
 Pension List attacked, 237, 314
 People's Paper, 19, 29, 38, 40, 61, 70
 Persia, 58
 Petitions to Parliament, 28-9
 Picketing, 114, 119
 Plasterers, 94
 Plimsoll, S., M.P., 202, 205 n., 362 n.

Plural Voting, 72, 97 n., 282, 300, 390, 391, 393, 395
 Poland, 27, 33, 47, 50, 406-7
 Police—
 Control of, 384, 388, 396-7, 402
 Metropolitan (see London)
 Polling Booth Costs, 154, 173, 237, 326, 330, 336
 Polling Hours Extension, 237, 239, 252 n., 286, 326
 Poor Law, Rating Equalisation, 106, 237
 Potter, George, 77 n.
 Potter, T. B., M.P., 78 n., 84
 Preston (1853 Lock-out), 18-20
 Primogeniture and Entail (see Land)
 Primrose League, 283
 Prince of Wales, 171, 279, 338
 Prisons Commission, 218
 Property (and Rating) Qualifications, 69, 237, 239, 242, 326, 386-9, 395
 Protection (see Reciprocity, Fair Trade)
 Proxy Voting (Lords) ended, 103
 Prussia, 27, 50 n., 91 n., 166, 180, 405, 407
 Punch, 43, 57

 Queen, The, 23, 64, 150 n., 164, 167-172, 174 n., 256, 285, 292, 292 n., 295 n., 338
 Queensland, 356 n., 357 n., 361

 Radicals, Contemporary Comments on, 11, 17 n., 23, 25 n., 35, 194, 254, 256, 267-8, 290, 316-17, 332 n., 378
 Radical Clubs, 249, 262-3, 294, 330, 336 n.
 Radical Press, The, 23, 26, 35, 36, 60, 61, 66, 322
 Radical Programme, The, 280, 296, 304, 315, 383, 403
 Radical, The, quoted, 262
 Railway Nationalisation advocated, 334 n., 336
 Railway Servants, 94
 Amalgamated Society of, 325
 Rates, Chap. xxiv *passim*
 Equalisation of, demanded, 106, 237
 Extension to Personal Property advocated, 388
 Maximum Limit demanded for School, 393
 Property Improvement Rate advocated, 403
 Reductions demanded, 191, 218
 Reform demanded, 237, 250, 314
 Rechabites, 126
 Reciprocity, 250, 301, 316
 Redistribution, 12, 27-30, 51, 71, 74, 92, 97, 100, 106, 125 n., 178, 200,

Redistribution (*continued*)—

203, 207, 252 n., 280, 286, 288,
296-7, 304, 306-9, 311, 326

Reform Bill (1854), 24-30, 82; (1857),
discussed, 64; (1858), discussed,
68; (1859), 71-2; (1860), 73-5,
82; (1866), 88-90 (*see also* Parlia-
mentary Reform Movements)

Registration Reform, 237, 309, 313 n.

Republicanism, 75 n., 78, 143, 165-72,
256

Retrenchment, 80, 125, 153, 178, 203,
252 n., 355

Reynolds's Newspaper, 49-50, 61 n.,
262, 360

Richard, Henry, Rev., M.P., 17 n.,
151, 155

Ripon, Lord, 40 n., 151, 375, 377,
378, 379 n.

Ritualism, 138, 196

Roebuck, J. A., M.P., 37, 38, 45, 46,
54, 192, 234 n.

Rogers, Capt. Dresser, 86

Rogers, Professor Thorold, M.P., 255,
257 n., 399

Roman Catholics, 32, 156, 193, 202-3,
291

Rome, 79

Royal Titles Bill, 194, 205

Rumania, 224, 226, 408

Ruskin, John, 166, 331 n., 342, 356 n.-
357 n.

Russell, Lord John (Earl Russell), 13,
25, 26, 27, 30, 38, 54, 62, 72, 74,
81, 82, 84, 88, 174 n.

Russia, 16, 20-2, 24, 25, 27, 31, 47-9,
58, 59, 166, 174, 210, 213-17,
223, 225-34, 246, 287 n., 305,
309, 357, 405-8

Rylands, P., M.P., 241 n.

Sabbatarianism, 28 n., 29

opposed, 46, 47, 56-7

Salisbury, 255

Salisbury, Lord, 152 n., 199, 215, 216,
226, 232, 263-4, 265 n., 269, 275,
290, 296 n., 305, 306, 312, 318,
320-1, 381 n., 407

Salt, Titus, 102

Salvation Army, 133, 342

Sardinia, 48 n., 57

"Saturday Half-Holiday," 77

Schleswig-Holstein, 81, 406

Schnadhorst, F., 221, 294

Scholarship Systems, 125 n., 199, 398

School Boards, 158-9, 179, 193, 218,
236-7, 386, 392-6, 404

Scotland—

Church of (*see* Church of S.)

Crofters, 299

Scotland (*continued*)—

Disestablishment, 197-8, 255, 278

Free Church, 197-8

Land Laws, 249, 270

Politics, 150, 255, 291, 299, 314

Reform League, 92

Reform Bill, 95, 100, 103, 104

University Seats, 27 n., 74, 306

University Tests, 13 n., 279 n.

Seamen, 94, 124, 326

Sebastopol, 36, 38, 42, 48

Sebastopol Committee, 38, 42, 45

Serbia, 210, 213-14, 215 n., 408

Shaftesbury, Lord, 11, 65, 98, 128-9,
215 n.

Sheffield, 26, 33, 110, 192, 202 n.,
241 n., 307

Trade Union Inquiry, 101, 111

Shipton, G., 236-7

Shipwrights, 94, 109 n.

Shoreditch, 46, 86, 392

Shorter Parliaments (*see* Parliaments)

Single Tax (*see* Land)

Small Holdings (*see* Land)

Smith, Goldwin, 166, 343, 347

Social Democratic Federation, 274,
329-41

Social Science Congresses, 128

Socialism, 220, 238-9, 275, 280, 300,
301, 315, Chap. xxi *passim*, 408

South Place Chapel, 142

Southwark, 156, 237, 255, 279 n.

Spain, 165 n., 172

Spinners, 19

Association, 109

Staffordshire, 109, 110

Staleybridge, 27 n., 267

Stansfeld, J., M.P., 148, 150 n., 151

State Reform Association, 47

Stead, W. T., 357 n.

Steam Engine Makers, 108 n.

Stock Exchange, 213 n., 216, 227, 354

Stockport, 18, 267

Stoke, 255

Stonemasons (*see* Masons)

Strike-breaking, 107, 111

Sturge, J., 55, 60

Succession Duties, 14, 15, 310

Sudan, The, 282, 287, 288 n., 304-6,
357

Suez Canal Shares, 194, 205, 359 n.

Suffrage—

Adult, 330

Extension, 28, 47, 61, 63, 92, 96,
125, 200, 203, 239, 279, 280,
283-97, 327

Manhood, 47, 90 n., 92, 280, 327

Registered Resident, 90 n., 237

Universal Adult, 336

Women's (*see* Women's Suffrage)

- Sunday Bands, 56-7
 Sunday Closing of Public Houses, 29,
 47 n., 252 n., 286, 318
 Sunday Museums, etc., Opening, 57
 Sunday Observance, 28 n., 29, 46, 47,
 56-7
 Sunday Trading, 46, 47 n.
 Sunderland, 91 n.
 Swansea, 403 n.
- Tailors, Operative, 77, 94, 108, III,
 114
 Taxation fairer to the Poor demanded,
 124, 125, 301, 314, 317
 "Taxes on Knowledge," 15, 59, 75
 Taylor, P. A., M.P., 84, 88 n., 94,
 162, 168
 Temperance Movement, The, 28 n.,
 29, 76, 94, 106, 182, 313, 385
 (see also Liquor Licensing)
 Tenant Right (see Land)
 Thetford, 96 n.
 Thomasson, T., 102
 Thornton, W. T., 107, 118, 119 n.
 Times, The, 35, 36, 67, 93, 165, 166,
 181 n., 192, 233, 289 n., 293, 349,
 355, 364
 Tithes attacked, 151 n., 275, 278, 279 n.
 Totnes, 96 n.
 Tower Hamlets, 96 n., 105, 255
 Town Councils, 13-14, 239, 383, 385-
 386, 402-4
 Trade Marks Registration Bill, 201
 Trades Councils, 189
 Trades Societies and Strikes, 113
 Trades Union Congress, 116, 120,
 121, 124, 190, 202, Chap. xxi
 passim
 Trade Unions, 18-20, 26, 76-7, 101,
 107, Chap. viii *passim*, 174, 180,
 182, 189, 191, Chap. xxi *passim*
 Trafalgar Square Meetings, 90, 91, 94,
 165, 167, 228, 229, 337, 340
 Transvaal, 218, 236, 246, 260, 263,
 287, 346, 357
 Trevelyan, Sir C., 41
 Trevelyan, G. O., 168, 191, 200, 225,
 292 n., 327
 Truck attacked, 124, 130, 131
 Truro, 105
 Turkey, 21, 21 n., 22, 24, 210-17,
 225-34, 246, 260, 305
 Tyneside, 68
 Chainmakers, 77
- Ulster, 269, 283, 321 n.
 Unearned Increment (see Land)
 Unemployed agitations, 334-7
 Unions (see Trade Unions)
 United Presbyterians, 197-8
- United States, 16, 17, 57, 74, 77, 78,
 98, 180, 246, 266, 282, 298, 345,
 357
 Universal (Adult) Suffrage (see Suff-
 rage)
 University Reform, 12, 13, 172-3
 University Representation, 27 n., 74,
 306
 University Tests (Religious) attacked,
 13, 32, 55, 56, 106, 152, 155, 162,
 172-3, 279
- Vatican Decrees, 202-3
 Vestries, 158, 390-2 (see also Parish
 Government)
 Vienna Conferences (1853-5), 21, 22,
 31, 42, 46
 Villiers, C. P., 12
- Wages, 18, 107, 124, 237-8, 251,
 333 n., 341 n., 358
 Wales, 94, 151, 255, 270, 286, 314,
 394 n., 395 n.
 Wallace, A. R., 135-6, 331 n.
 Walmsley, Sir Joshua, M.P., 28, 56
 Warwick, 103
 Weavers, Power Loom, 108, 109
 Welsh Disestablishment advocated,
 151, 162, 255, 278, 295
 Wesleyans (see Methodists)
 West End (London), 90, 175
 West Indies, 344, 350 n., 362 (see also
 Jamaica)
 West Riding, 94
 Whigs, 11, 12, 24, 25, 41, 151, 195,
 204, 259, 264, 272-3, 336, 399
 Wilson, George,
 Wolverhampton, 12, 403 n.
- Women—
 Equality of Payment with Men, 336
 Married Women's Property, 163
 Women's Suffrage, 162-3, 201, 319
 Woolwich, 174 n., 177, 178, 229 n.,
 401
 Working-Class Food, Rent, etc., 331
 Working-Class Housing (see Housing)
 Working-Class Recreation, 314, 398
 Working-Class Scepticism, 133
 Working Men's Clubs, 126, 149
 Working Men's International Associa-
 tion, 87, 106, 111, 170, 406-7
 Working Men Magistrates, Factory
 Inspectors, etc., 327, 328
 Workman's Compensation, 124, 129-
 130, 238, 243, 257, 325, 326
 Wright, R. S., 324, 325
- Yeh, 62
 Yorkshire, 27 n., 94, 307
- Zululand, 236, 241-2, 245, 246

